A TRANSLATION OF DANTE'S INFERNO BY DAVID JOHNSTON

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BY

DAVID JOHNSTON

BATH

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MDCCCLXVII

CANTO I

In our life's journey at its midway stage
  I found myself within a wood obscure,
  Where the right path which guided me was lost.
Ah! what it was how difficult to tell,
  This forest solitude, so stern and wild 5
  That ev'n in thought my terror is renew'd,
So grievous bitter, death seems scarcely more;
  Yet ere the good I found therein be told,
  'Tis right to speak of other things I saw.
How I gain'd entrance fails me now to tell, 10
  So deep my sense's slumber at the point
  Where I abandon'd the clear way of truth.
But when I reach'd nigh to a mountain's foot
  Where clos'd that valley up which had my heart
  Pain'd and afflicted with a heavy dread; 15
Upwards I look'd, and saw its shoulders cloth'd
  With the effulgence of that planet's ray,
  Which leadeth all men ev'rywhere aright.

In measure then did pass away the fear,
  Which in my heart's great depths that night did lie, 20
  So spent by me in anguish deep and dark.
Like unto one who with a struggling breath
  From ocean sav'd turns from the beach to gaze
  Upon the wat'ry peril he has pass'd;
So did my spirit fleeing onward still 25
  Look back once more that passage to behold
  Through which none pass'd and living ever left.
When I had giv'n my weary body rest,
  Up the wild slope my journey I resum'd,
  My lowest ever still my firmest foot. 30
And lo! where steep and rough the ascent began,
  A leopard lithe and very swift of limb
  Before me stood cloth'd in a spotted skin;
Ever in front of me and full in face
  It barr'd my onward way, so that my step 35
  At times could scarce restrain its backward move.
It was the hour of dawning, when the sun
  Rose in his upward journey with those stars
  Which roll'd their spheres with him when Love Divine
Mov'd at the first those things most beautiful; 40
  So I had ev'ry reason for my hope,
  Of the gay beauty of that creature's skin,
In the sweet season and the pleasant time;
  But not the less my terror when beneath
  My fearful gaze a lion rose to view. 45

He seem'd towards me in his rage to spring
  With rav'ning hunger and uplifted head;
  The air itself seem'd tremulous with fear;
And a she-wolf which in her leanness gaunt
  Looked full of gnawing, and of fierce desire, 50
  And had ere this brought many lives to woe
So great the trouble pressing on my heart
  Born of the fear which sight of her awoke,
  That to attain the summit hope was dead
Like unto one who, gladden'd by his gains, 55
  When the hour comes which sweeps them all away,
  In ev'ry thought sadden'd and tearful mourns;
So did she trouble me this restless beast,
  As facing me, by small and small degrees,
  She thrust me back where silent is the sun. 60
Whilst to the lower ground I downward sank,
  One shewed himself unto my straining eyes,
  Who seemed, from silence long continued, hoarse.
When I beheld him in that desert vast,
  With a loud cry I cried,—" Have pity thou, 65
  " Whether thou art a spirit or true man."
" No man," he answered, " but a man I was,
  " In Lombard land my parents drew their breath,
  " And both their place and home in Mantua found.
" Born under Julius ere his pow'r supreme, 70
  " I lived while good Augustus held the rule,
  " And Rome was filled with false and lying Gods.

" Poet I was, and sung of that just son
" Lov'd of Anchises, when he passed from Troy,
" What time by fire consum'd proud Ilion fell. 75
" But thou! why to such weariness return?
" Why dost thou not the Mount Delightsome scale,
" Of perfect joy at once the source and cause?"
" Art thou that Virgil, thou that fount from whence
" Eternal spreads the stream of living words?"— 80
I ask'd, with downcast eyes and bashful front.
" Oh of all Poets light and glory thou!
" Aid me that study long and that great love,
" Which made thy volume my unceasing search.
" My Master thou and Inspiration art; 85
" Thou—thou art he from whom alone I took
" That noble style which me my glory won.
" Behold that beast from which I fearful turn;
" Help me—oh help me—great and famous Sage,
" She makes me tremble both in pulse and vein." 90
" Another way, not here thy passage lies,"—
He answer'd me when he perceived my tears,
" If thou wouldst save thee from this savage place,
" For lo! this creature, cause of thy great cry,
" Lets none pass by her, but so bars the way, 95
" And with such deadly malice, that she slays.
" So evil is her nature and so foul,
" Her lustful appetite is never quench'd,
" And after eating she still craves the more.

" Beasts of all kinds her mates, and she will mate 100
" With others many, till the hound shall come
" And make her taste the pangs of dol'rous death.
" Earth and earth's riches he shall not desire,
" But wisdom love and virtue—and between
" Feltro and Feltro shall his nation lie. 105
" Saviour of this down-trodden Italy,
" For which Camilla gave her virgin life,
" Turnus, Euryalus and Nisus died;
" He ev'rywhere the ceaseless chace shall press
" Until he thrust her back into that Hell, 110
" Whence by the primal envy driven she came.
" To thee then better counsel I commend,
" Follow thou me and I will be thy guide,
" And lead thee hence through the Eternal Realms;
" Where thou shalt hear the wail of wild despair, 115
" And of old times the sorrowful spirits see
" Calling in anguish for the second death;
" And those too shalt thou see content to lie
" In fiery torment, for they hope to come
" At the good time unto the blessed souls, 120
" To which, if afterwards thou wouldst ascend,
" Then shall a purer spirit be thy guide;
" To her I leave thee when from thee I part;
" For lo the Ruler! He who reigns on high,
" For that I was a rebel to His law, 125
" Wills none unto His gates by me shall come.

" Lord over all and everywhere Supreme !
" There His great city—there His Royal Throne ;
" Ah happy whom He there elects to stand !"—
And then I said ;—" Poet I thee beseech 130
" By that Great God who was to thee unknown,
" That this and greater evil I may flee,
" Conduct me onwards whither thou hast said,
" That I may see the holy Peter's gate,
" And those most sorrowful of whom thou speak'st."— 135
So he passed onwards and I after came.

CANTO II

The day was waning and the thick'ning air
  Gave note of rest from trouble and from toil,
  To all earth's creatures,—I alone was left
To arm my spirit to sustain the fight
  Both of the journey, and the anguish dread, 5
  Which mem'ry never erring shall describe.
Oh Muse!—oh lofty genius—aid me now;
  And thou oh Mind which writeth what I saw,
  Here shall thy true nobility appear!
Thus I began—"Oh Poet! thou my guide, 10
  "Behold my strength—search me if I have pow'r,
  "To meet thy faith and face the lofty work.
"Thou say'st that he, of Silvius the Sire,
  "Although corruptible did breathe the breath
  "Of the immortal with his mortal sense. 15
"And if the Great Opponent of all ill
  "Thus deign'd, in knowledge of the lofty fame
  "Of him who sprang, of that which rose from him;

" To man's intelligence it seemeth good,
" Since he of mighty Rome and of her pow'r, 20
" In the Empyrean was elected Sire;
" Both of which were (and the truth must be told),
" For ever stablish'd in the Holy Place
" Where greater Peter's great Successor sits
" During his progress—honour'd by thy song, 25
" He heard of things whence in their order sprang
" His own great vict'ry and the Papal Robe.
" There too in time the Chosen Vessel went
" To fetch from thence assurance of that faith
" Which is our entrance to Salvation's path. 30
" But I!—why go I there?—who gives me right?
" Æneas I am not—I am no Paul!
" That I am worthy I nor others think!
" For if I fearless should the venture dare,
" I fear the venture may my folly prove. 35
" Thy wisdom better than my reas'ning knows."—
And as with him unwishing what he wish'd,
Who changes purpose as new thoughts arise,
So that his first intentions pass away;
It was with me when on that coast obscure, 40
For as thought grew, the enterprise was lost,
Which at the first so quickly I desir'd.
" If I thy words have rightly understood,"
Then answer'd me that shade magnanimous,—
" Thy spirit is by cowardice unstrung, 45

" By which man oft is hinder'd and beset,
" So that he turns away from honour's call,
" As a beast starts, by vision false deceiv'd.
" That from this fear thou may'st thyself absolve,
" I tell thee why I came—what I did hear, 50
" Ev'n at the moment first for thee I griev'd.
" Among the Souls suspended, lo I was!
" A Lady called me, beautiful and bless'd,
" So that my wish did long for her command.
" Her eyes were brighter than the stars of light; 55
" And she began to speak softly and low,
" And her discourse was as an angel's voice;
" ' Oh Mantuan—oh most gentle spirit—thou!
" ' Whose fame embraces the wide world's expanse,
" ' And shall endure so long its movement lasts; 60
" ' A friend of mine, but yet not fortune's friend,
" ' Is hinder'd so in that most lonely place
" ' That from his journey he recoils in dread.
" ' I fear ev'n now, despairing he is lost,
" ' For all too late unto his help I come, 65
" ' Knowing what I have heard of him in Heav'n
" ' Go then to him and with thy golden words,
" ' And with all else his safety may demand,
" ' Aid him that I may consolation find.
" ' For I am Beatrice who bid thee go, 70
" ' I come from whence I hunger to return,
" ' Moved by that love which urges me to speak.

" 'When I shall stand in presence of My Lord,
" 'Oft shall my praise to him be full of thee.'
"So she was silent — and then I began; 75
" 'Oh Lady Virtuous and through whom alone
" 'The human race excels all else contained
" 'Within the lesser circle of the Heav'ns,
" 'So very sweet to me is thy command,
" 'That my obedience—ev'n in act—is slow, 80
" 'Further thou need'st not open me thy will.
" 'But tell me why thou carest to descend
" 'Down to this limbo from the region wide
" 'Whither thou burnest to return again.'
" 'Since deeper knowledge is so much thy wish, 85
" 'Briefly I tell thee,'—so she answer made,—
" 'Why here to enter bringeth me no fear.
" 'Those things alone are to be fear'd which have
" 'Pow'r to do others evil; all beside,
" 'If pow'rless so to do, can cause no dread. 90
" 'God in his mercy hath so fashion'd me,
" 'By all your misery I am never touch'd,
" 'And this hot flame assaileth me in vain.
" 'In Heav'n a gentle Lady so bewails
" 'The hindrance for the which thine aid I claim, 95
" 'That the High Judgment bows to her lament.
" 'She in her urgent prayer on Lucia call'd
" 'And said,—Of thee thy faithful friend hath need,
" 'Him to thy loving pity I entrust.

" ' Lucia, to whom all cruel things are hate, 100
" ' Mov'd onwards to the place wherein I was,
" ' Seated with Rachel of the ancient time
" ' And said—Oh Beatrice, God's very praise!
" ' Why help not him whose love for thee was such,
" ' He from the world of common men came forth; 105
" ' Hearest thou not the anguish of his plaint?
" ' Dost thou not see the death he combateth
" ' In life's fierce flood?—where the sea pow'rless rolls.—
" ' None mortal ever hasten'd with such haste
" ' To shun the evil or to seize the good, 110
" ' As I upon the utt'rance of these words,
" ' Descended hither from my bless'd abode,
" ' Trusting to thy discourse so full of truth,
" ' Which honours thee and those who give it ear.'—
" After she thus had spoken, then aside 115
" She turn'd her shining eyes heavy with tears;
" Wherefore my wish to aid her stronger grew;
" And so to thee I came, ev'n as she wish'd;
" From the fierce creature I have rescued thee,
" Which clos'd the true way to the pleasant Mount. 120
" What hast thou then? why—why delayest thou?
" Why doth such cowardice thy heart assail?
" Why fail thy courage and the will to dare?
" When three such blessed Ladies in the Court
" Of the High Heav'n so make thy weal their charge, 125
" And in my words such promise I have giv'n?"—

As are the flow'rets by the cold of night
  Drooping and clos'd till brighten'd by the sun,
  When straight with op'ning leaves they upward shoot;
So once again my drooping courage rose; 130
  And through my heart so great an ardour cours'd,
  That as one full of boldness thus I spoke;
" Oh she most pitiful who gave me help!
  " Oh thou most gentle who so quickly gave
  " Obedience to her true and loving words! 135
" Thou hast so filled my heart with deep desire,
  " To make the venture, by thy noble words,
  " That I return unto my first resolve.
" Lead on—one only will inspires us both;
  " My guide, My Lord, My Master lo thou art!"— 140
  And so I spake, and when he onwards mov'd,
I enter'd on the deep and dang'rous way.

CANTO III.

" I am the way unto the dolorous city ;
" I am the way unto th' eternal dole ;
" I am the way unto the spirits lost.
" By Justice was my mighty Maker mov'd ;
" Omnipotence Divine created me, 5
" Infinite Wisdom and Primeval Love.
" Prior to me no thing created was
" But things eternal—I eternal am ;
" Leave hope behind all ye who enter here."—
These words in gloomy colour I beheld 10
Over a portal written—then I said
" Master !—their meaning seemeth to me hard."
He answer'd me like one of insight quick ;
" Here all suspicion must be cast aside ;
" Here cowardice may no existence find. 15
" Now we have reach'd the place of which I spake,
" And thou shalt see the souls most sorrowful
" Who the Beatitude supreme have lost."

And then within my hand he plac'd his own
With cheerful aspect, and I comfort took ; 20
So to the hidden things he led me in.
Here sighs and moans and wailings terrible
Resounded through the dim and starless air ;
Ev'n at the first my tears might not be stay'd.
Tongues diverse, foul and horrible discourse, 25
Utterings of grief and accents of deep rage,
Words loud and hoarse, the sound of raging hands
Fierce tumult made, which sweeps with ceaseless roll
In the deep darkness of that timeless air,
As the sand rushes where the whirlwind blows. 30
And I whose head in ignorance was bound,
Cried—" Master ! say what meaneth this I hear ?
" And who be they who seem so sunk in pain ?"
He said—" This state of misery is held
" By the sad spirits of those, who in their lives 35
" Knew neither act of infamy nor praise.
" And they are mingl'd with the wicked choir
" Of Angels who, not rebels to their God,
" Were yet not faithful, knowing but themselves ;
" Cast forth that Heav'n's pure beauty be not stain'd, 40
" Into Hell's gloomy depths permitted not
" Lest they be cause of glory to the lost."
Then I—" Oh Master, what the mighty grief
" Which makes in them such lamentation loud ?"
He answer'd me—" This in few words I tell. 45

" Those whom thou seest have no hope of death,
" And their blind life so deeply is debas'd
" That they are envious of all others' state
" No name nor fame the world to them accords;
" Mercy and Justice hold them in disdain;— 60
" Let us not talk of them, but look and pass."
And I who looked beheld a banner roll
Its whirling folds along with sweep so swift,
It seemed as if disdaining all repose.
And then behind it came so long a train 65
Of spirits, I myself had scarce belief
That death so many ever had undone.
Some there I recognis'd, and then my gaze
Was fix'd, and I beheld the shade of him
Whose coward blood renounc'd his lofty state 60
And so incontinent I knew that those
Were surely of the sect of wicked men
To God displeasing—and to His enemies.
They the accursèd in whom life was naught,
Were naked and were fiercely goaded on 65
By swarms of gnats and wasps abounding there.
These mark'd their visages with streaks of blood
Which mingl'd with their tears, and at their feet
Was by most foul and loathsome worms consum'd.
And as my gaze pierc'd further, I beheld 70
A crowd upon a mighty river's bank;
Wherefore I said—" Oh Master, grant that I

"May know who these may be and what restraint
"Makes them appear so eager to pass o'er,
"As by the glimmering light I can discern." 75
He said to me—"All these things thou shalt know
"So soon our footsteps shall have come to rest
"On the most sorrowful shore of Acheron."—
Then with mine eyes downcast and full of shame,
Fearing my speaking may have troubl'd him, 80
I silence kept until the stream was reach'd.
And lo! towards us in a bark approach'd
An aged man and white with hoary hair
Crying—"Woe, woe to you, ye wicked souls!
Hope not that you can ever Heaven behold; 85
I come to guide you to the other shore,
To night eternal, endless cold and heat.
And thou, oh living spirit, who art here,
Tarry not thou with these who are the dead."
But when he saw that I departed not, 90
He said, "By other ways, by other means,
The shore thou gainest, here thou passest not;
A lighter bark must carry thee across."
"Charon,"—the Leader said—"cease from thy rage;
"There it is will'd, where is the pow'r to do 95
"That which is will'd; so question thou no more."—
Then there was quiet to the bearded cheeks
Of him, the pilot of the livid lake,
Around whose eyeballs fiery circles roll'd.

But that most miserable and naked crowd 100
Chang'd colour, and began to gnash their teeth,
Immediately they heard those cruel words.
God they blasphem'd, their parents they blasphem'd,
The human race, the place, the time, the seed
Of their conception and nativity. 105
Then by one impulse driv'n they onwards rush'd
With bitter weeping to th' accursèd shore,
The doom of all who have not God in fear
Charon the demon, with his flaming eye
Giving them signal, there collects them all; 110
And with his oar strikes each who makes delay
As do the leaves in autumn loosen hold,
One after other, till the naked branch
Renders its leafy honours to the earth:
In a like manner Adam's evil seed 115
Did one by one thrust themselves from the bank,
Lur'd by the signal as a bird is lur'd.
Thus o'er the gloomy wave they took their way,
And whilst the other side was yet unreach'd,
Already a fresh crowd had fill'd their place. 120
" My son"—the courteous Master said to me,
" All those who die in the great wrath of God,
" From ev'ry country here together meet.
" Eager they are to pass across the stream,
" For God's eternal justice goads them on, 125
" So that their fear is turn'd into desire

" No righteous Spirit passeth over here;
  " Therefore if Charon make complaint of thee,
  " Thou knowest well the meaning of his words."—
When he had spoken, lo! the gloomy plain 130
  With a loud trembling shook, and such my fear,
  That a great sweat bedews me at the thought.
The weeping earth gave forth a mighty wind,
  Flashing with lightnings of vermilion hue,
  By which all sense and knowledge were destroy'd, 135
And as one seiz'd with sudden sleep, I fell.

CANTO IV.

My head's deep sleep was broken by the sound
  Of heavy thunder, and I rous'd myself
  Like one awaken'd suddenly by force;
And when mine eyes had rest, I cast them round
  Standing erect, and fixedly I gaz'd 5
  That I might know the place where now I was.
And lo! I found myself upon the brink
  Of a great valley's dolorous abyss,
  Where swells the sound of infinite lament.
Gloomy it was, profound, and nebulous, 10
  So that my gaze, though rivated below,
  Had no discernment of what might be there.
"Let us pass downwards to the sightless world,"
  The Poet said, his visage ashy pale;
  "I lead the way, the second thou shalt come"— 15
But I, who quickly saw his colour change,
  Said—"How shall I, if fear ev'n masters thee,
  "Thou until now my comforter in doubt?"

He answer'd me—" The agony of those
" Who are beneath, upon my features paints
" That pity which thou takest to be fear.
" Onward !—the length of road brooks no delay."
So he, and mov'd by him, so entered I
In the first circle which th' abyss surrounds.
There as I listen'd I could hear no sound
Of plaint or moan, but rather that of sighs
Which tremulous did stir th' eternal air ;
This came not from the martyrdom of pain,
But from the dole of those, many and great,
Of children, and of women, and of men.
My kindly master said—" Thou askest not
" Who be those spirits which thou seest now ?
" Yet ere we further go, be to thee known
" They sinned not ; yet no merit claim'd by them
" Availeth aught, because they never knew
" The Grace Baptismal, portal of thy creed :
" And if they liv'd before the day of Grace,
" They could not in right spirit worship God
" And of that number I myself am one.
" For this default and for no other guilt
" We are lost souls ; afflicted only thus,
" That ever hopeless we must still desire."
On hearing this, great sorrow fill'd my heart,
For I knew well that many priceless souls
Were in that limbo in suspension held

"Tell me, my master, tell me, oh my lord"—
I cried, wishing to gain assurance full
Touching that faith which error all subdues;
"Did ever hence go forth—by his own works
"Or other's merit, one who bliss attain'd?" 33
And he, who knew my inner meaning, said:
"But a short space of time my sojourn here,
"When lo! I saw One come, a Potent one,
"With emblem and with sign of victory crown'd,
"He drew from hence our primal father's shade, 55
"The shade of Abel, and the shade of Noah,
"Moses who gave the law, obedient him,
"The Patriarch Abraham, David the great king,
"And Israel with his father and his sons,
"And with his Rachel for whose love he toil'd; 60
"With others many; and He made them bless'd;
"But know thou this, that before these did none
"Of spirit human to salvation come."
We ceas'd not from our journey as he spake,
But through the forest pass'd continuously, 63
For so I call that countless crowd of souls.
Not yet far onward were we on our way
This side the summit, when behold a fire
Conq'ring the gloom of that dark hemisphere
We were still distant from it some small space, 70
But scarcely such that I might not discern
A band illustrious held possession there.

" Oh thou who honourest art and science, say
" Who may those be who are of such renown
" They from all others hold themselves apart?"— 75
He made me answer—" Their most honour'd name,
" Which loud resounded in thy life above,
" Prevails in Heav'n to give them honour here."
While yet he spake I heard a voice exclaim:—
" Unto the loftiest Poet honour give, 80
His shade which left us hath returned again!"
And when the voice had spoken, and was still,
I saw approaching us four mighty shades,
With aspect showing neither grief nor joy.
And then to me my kindly master said: 85
" Take note of him who with that sword in hand
" Before the other three comes as their lord.
" Homer the Poet Sovereign is he!—
" Next Horace comes, the satirist, and then
" Ovid the third, and lastly Lucan comes. 90
" Since each agrees with me in the same name,
" Which they all sound as with one voice alone,
" They do me honour and in this do well."—
So I beheld assembl'd the fair school
Of him the lord supreme of loftiest song, 95
Who above others like an eagle soars.
Converse they held together for brief space;
Then with a courteous sign they turn'd to me,
At seeing which my gentle master smil'd

And then with greater honour I was crown'd; 100
For of their company they made me one;
In so much wisdom I was thus a sixth.
Then we all forward mov'd towards the light,
Speaking of things, not meet to speak of now,
Though at the time and place they suited well. 105
Nigh to a stately castle's foot we came,
By lofty walls encircl'd seven times round,
And with a pleasant rivulet for moat.
O'er this we pass'd, as it had been dry ground;
Through seven gates ent'ring with those spirits wise, 110
We reach'd a meadow with fresh verdure green.
People were there with eyes sedate and grave,
Bearing the look of high authority;
Seldom they spake, and then with gentle voice.
We at one angle turn'd our steps aside 115
Into an open space lofty and light,
Whence all the great assemblage might be seen.
There on the green enamel facing me
Those mighty spirits unto me were shown,
Whom ev'n to see was glory to myself. 120
I saw Electra with a goodly train,
In which I mark'd both Hector and Æneas;
And armed Cæsar with the eagle eye;
I saw Camilla and Penthesilea;
On th' other side I saw the Latin king 125
There seated with Lavinia his child,

That Brutus, by whom Tarquin was expell'd;
  Lucrezia, Julia, Martia, Cornelia;
  And, by himself apart, the Saladin.
And as my vision somewhat higher rangad, 130
  I saw the master of the learn'd and wise
  Among the sons of wisdom seated chief,
All gaze on him and give him honour great.
  There Plato too I saw and Socrates,
  Who near to him before all others stand; 135
Democritus who holds the world as chance,
  Anaxagoras, Diogenes, and Thales,
  Empedocles, Heraclitus, Zeno;
And him, collector and great judge of herbs,
  Dioscorides, and Orpheus too I saw; 140
  Seneca the moralist, Tullius and Livy;
Euclid geometer, and Ptolemy,
  Hippocrates, Avicenna, Galen;
  And Averrhoes—commentator great.
All fully to recount I lack the pow'r, 145
  For the vast theme, so hurries me along
  That oft expression fails me in my work.
Our number lessens now from six to two;
  My leader wise leads me another way,
  Forth from the still unto the trembling air, 150
And there where all is rayless, lo I come.

CANTO V.

From the first circuit thus I downwards pass'd
  Into the second, girdling smaller space,
  Where so much greater woe breaks forth in howls.
There horrible and grinning Minos sits;
  As each one enters, every crime he marks, 5
  Judges, dismisses, as he twines himself.
For so it is that as each mis-born soul
  There stands before him, it confesses all;
  And he the great Inquisitor of Sin
Sees in what place of Hell shall be its place; 10
  He coils his tail around him just so oft
  As the degrees he wills each soul shall sink.
Always before him stands a concourse vast;
  Each comes to judgment as his turn presents;
  They speak, and hear, and then are thrust below. 15
"Oh thou who comest to the home of pain,"
  Said to me Minos, when he saw me there,
  Ceasing awhile his act of judgment high,—

" See how thou ent'rest, and in whom thy trust;
" By the wide entrance be not thou deceiv'd." 20
Then said my guide to him;—" Why chidest thou?
" Hinder thou not his fated entrance here;
" There it is will'd, where is the pow'r to do
" That which is will'd; so question thou no more."
And then became the sorrowful laments 25
To me all sensible,—now I am come
Where deadly anguish strikes my being through,
Into a place where ev'ry light is mute,
And there is roaring as when tempest struck,
Tho ocean battles with opposing winds. 30
The hurricane infernal, resting never,
With its fierce fury drives the spirits on;
Rolling and striking them with torment dread.
When they arrive before the shatter'd strand,
Their evil cries, and moans, and fierce laments, 35
God's Pow'r and Awful Majesty blasphema.
Then I perceiv'd this torment was to those
Whose condemnation was for carnal sins,
Who made their reason subject to their lusts.
As starlings in their wingèd strength are borne 40
In winter season, flocking wide and deep;
So are the wicked spirits by this blast
Upwards and downwards, hither, thither swept,
Having to comfort them no hope of rest
From their great woe, nor e'en of lesser pain. 45

And as the cranes float on with plaintive song,
  Making in flight long lines across the sky,
  So saw I come and uttering wailings loud,
Ghosts driven onward by that tempest fierce.
  Then said I—"Tell me, Master, who be they 50
  "Whom the black air so beateth to and fro?"—
"The first of these of whom thy great desire
  "To know the story,"—so to me he said,
  "Was Empress over lands of many tongues.
"She with luxurious vice was so corrupt, 55
  "Lust she made lawful in her laws, to take
  "From her own conduct all restraint of blame.
"She is Semiramis, of great renown,
  "Of Ninus the successor and the spouse;
  "She held the land which now the Soldan rules. 60
"The other, she who amorous slew herself,
  "And who her faith with dead Sichœus broke;
  "Then Cleopatra, the luxurious Queen."
Helen I saw, whose sin became the cause
  Of so much evil; and Achilles great 65
  Who fought with love and perished in the fight.
Paris I saw, and Tristan; and he nam'd
  And with his finger pointed thousands more
  By love dissever'd from our breathing life.
When I had heard my Master name the throng 70
  Of dames and cavaliers of ancient times,
  Pity o'ercame me and perplex'd I grew.

" Poet," I said, "I have a longing wish
" To speak to those two spirits who so cling
" Together and so lightly press the air" 75
He answer'd me—" Mark thou when they shall be,
" Nearer to us; then pray them by that love
" Which binds them in their flight; and they will come."
So when the wind had swept them tow'rds us, then
I raised my voice:—" Oh souls most sorrowful, 80
" Come ye and speak to us, if not forbid"
As doves, by the sweet will of instinct call'd
To their lov'd nest, with stretch'd and rigid wings
Cleave through the air, borne onwards by the wish;
So from the troop round Dido forth these came, 85
Hast'ning towards us through th' infected air,
So great the puissance of that pitying cry.
" Oh creature gracious and benignant, thou.
" Who through the air of purple blackness com'st
" To visit us who stain'd the earth with blood, 90
" If the great King Eternal were our friend,
" To Him our prayer were offer'd for thy peace,
" Since thou hast pity of our wretched wrong.
" Whate'er it pleaseth thee to hear and speak,
" That we will hear, and we will tell to you 95
" Whilst the now silent wind continueth still
" The land where I was born is seated there
" On the sea's margin, where the Po descends
" With all its tributaries seeking rest.

" Love which the gentle heart so soon inflames 100
" Smote this one with the beauty of that form
" So torn from me, the way still gives me grief.
" Love, which from no one lov'd denial takes,
" Fill'd me in this one's love with joy so great,
" That as thou seest it still clings to me. 105
" Love in our passion led us to one death;
" Caina awaits him who our bodies slew."
These words from them were carried unto us.
But when I heard those souls most sorrowful,
My visage droop'd and long I held it sunk, 110
Until the Poet said—" What thinkest thou?"
And then I answer'd—" Oh most pitiful!
" How sweet the thoughts, how mighty the desire
" Which brought those creatures to this dolorous pass!"
Turning again towards them, then I said: 115
" Francesca, thy great sufferings make me drop
" Great tears of anguish, sorrowful and sad.
" But tell me—at the time of your sweet sighs,
" When and how Love first granted you to know
" Of your desires and doubts the meaning full?" 120
She said to me—" No greater grief than this,
" Mem'ry to hold of the past happy time
" In misery; and that thy Teacher knows.
" But if thou hast so great desire to hear
" Of our dear love the early spring and bud, 125
" I will now speak as one who weeps and speaks.

" One day we read, to pass a pleasant time,
" How Lancelot was bound in chains of love;
" Alone we were and no suspicion knew.
" Often we sigh'd; and as we read, our eyes 130
" Each other sought, the colour fled our cheeks;
" But we were vanquish'd by one point alone.
" When we had read how the smile long desir'd
" Was kiss'd by him who lov'd with such deep love,
" This one, from me no more to be apart, 135
" Trembling all over, kiss'd me on the mouth.
" Galeotto was the writer and the book;
" In it we read no further on that day."—
Whilst the one spake, the other spirit wept
Tears of such sorrow, that from pity I 140
Was by a deathlike faintness overcome;
And lo, I fell, as a dead body falls.

CANTO VI.

As my mind rallied from the deep collapse
  Born of my pity for the kindred pair,
  And which with sadness had my soul confus'd,
Fresh torments, and fresh souls in torment held,
  I saw around me, wheresoe'er I mov'd, 5
  Where'er I turned, wherever curious gazed.
In the third circle now I am, of rain
  Eternal and accursèd, heavy, cold;
  Knowing no change of quantity or kind.
Great hailstones, water foul and inky, snow 10
  Through the tenebrous air are scatter'd forth,
  Causing great stench where'er their fury falls.
The monster Cerberus, cruel, fierce and strange,
  Barks like a dog from out his triple throat
  Over the multitude submergèd there. 15
With eyes vermilion, black and filthy beard,
  With belly large, with sharp and piercing claws
  He tears those spirits, flays, dismembers them.

The show'r unceasing makes them howl like dogs.
  Frequent, each side alternating, they turn, 20
  Inward for shelter, wretches most profane!
When Cerberus, the great worm, discover'd us,
  His mouth he open'd, and his tusks he show'd;
  His every limb with restless motion quick.
And he my leader, stretching forth his hands, 25
  Took of the earth and, having fill'd them both,
  Threw it within the insatiate monster's maw.
As a dog baying with a fierce desire,
  Tasting the food, is suddenly appeas'd,
  And snarls and battles o'er the morsel sought, 30
So with the foul and filthy muzzles it was
  Of Cerberus, the demon whose great roar
  So stuns those spirits, they would fain be deaf.
Over the ghosts we pass'd, struck to the ground
  By the fierce rain, and plac'd our feet on what 35
  Though incorporeal still corporeal seem'd.
They all lay stretch'd upon the ground save one,
  Who quickly moving, upright sate and said,
  When he perceiv'd that we were passing by:
"Oh thou, who through this nether Hell art dragg'd, 40
  "Me dost thou recognise? If so, then speak,
  "For before death unmade me, thou wert made."
I answer'd him—"The anguish which thou hast
  "Perhaps withdraws thee from my memory.
  "I never saw thee, so at least it seems. 45

" But tell me who thou art, who thus art plac'd
" In the sad region of such grief and pain,
" That if some greater, so offensive none"
He answer'd me—" Thy city, now so full
" Of envy that the measure runneth o'er, 50
" Was my abode in my life's peaceful days;
" You call'd me Ciacco, you, ye citizens;
" For gluttony's accursèd sin I lie,
" As now thou seest, by this tempest worn,
" And I, unhappy soul, am not alone, 55
" All here a punishment alike receive
" For sins alike;" and then he ceas'd to speak.
I answer'd him—" Ciacco, thy mighty grief
" So weighs upon me, that it moves my tears,
" But tell me, if thou canst, how will it be
" With this divided city's citizens?
" Be there one just man there? Tell me the cause
" Why by such discord it is now assail'd?"
And he to me—" Disputes continued long
" Will come to blood, the faction of the woods 65
" Will hunt the other forth with injury sore;
" But speedy is its fall Before three suns
" Complete their orbits shall the other mount
" By aid of him whose flattery ready comes
" Long shall he bear his front uplifted high, 70
" Holding the other under heavy loads,
" However it may grieve, however rage

"Two Just there are; but these will no one hear,
"For gnawing envy, avarice, and pride
"Are the three sparks which have all hearts inflam'd." 75
And so his lamentable tale he clos'd.
And then I spake—"Still would I further hear,
"And thank thy courtesy to tell me more.
"Farinata and Tegghiaio, worthy both,
"Jacopo Rusticucci, Arrigo, 80
"Mosca and others, quick to do the right—
"Tell me where they are, let me know their state;
"Oh great is my desire to know if they
"Be sooth'd in Heav'n, or poison'd be in Hell?"
He said—"Their place is with the blacker souls, 85
"Dragg'd downwards to the depths by other crimes,
"There to be seen, if thou descend'st so low;
"But when again the sweet earth thou shalt tread,
"Call me, I pray thee, to men's memories.
"I speak no more, no further answer give." 90
With eyes strange twisted from their vision true,
He gaz'd on me a moment, bow'd his head,
Then, like the others, blind and prostrate fell.
And my guide said to me—"He wakes no more,
"Till at the sound of the angelic trump, 95
"When the Great Pow'r Antagonist shall come.
"Then each shall find again his gloomy tomb,
"Each shall resume his flesh and earthly form,
"Each hear what through eternity shall peal"

Onward we travell'd, through the mixture foul 100
  Of ghosts and driving rain, with measur'd steps,
  Touching the while upon the life to come.
And then I said—"These torments, master, say,
  "Will they increase after the awful doom,
  "Or become less? Will they be sharp as now?" 105
Then he to me—"Unto thy science turn,
  "Which teaches, the more perfect be the thing,
  "It knows the good, it feels the suffering more.
"Although this multitude accurs'd may not
  "Unto the true perfection ever come, 110
  "After, rather than now, they look for it."
We took our course circuitous along,
  Speaking of things, not to be spoke again;
  We reach'd the point where downward sinks the way;
There we found Plutus, the great enemy. 115

CANTO VII

"Papè Satan, papè Satan, aleppe,"
Plutus began with raucous voice to cry;
And he, my gentle sage, who all things knew,
Said this to comfort me—"Be not cast down
"By thine own fear, for pow'rful though he be, 5
"He shall not bar to us the rock's descent."
And then he turn'd to that rage-swollen face,
And said—"Cease, cease, oh wolf accurs'd! be thou
"By thine own fury inwardly consumed.
"Not without cause we seek the depth of depths; 10
"It is the will above, where Michael's sword
"Took vengeance on the pride adulterous."
As a ship's sails distended by the wind
Fall loose and twisted round the shiver'd mast,
So to the earth this cruel monster fell. 15
Thus we descended to the fourth concave,
Holding more fully to the doleful shore,
Which evil universal all involves.

Oh, God's great justice! who heaps up the mass
  Of pains and labours new which meet mine eye? 20
  Why does our crime so tear and torture us?
As the wild waters o'er Charybdis rush,
  Wave meeting wave and breaking with the shock,
  So in their dance the crowd for ever whirls.
Nowhere I saw so vast a multitude, 25
  Who, with great howling, and on either side,
  Roll mighty masses by their weight of chest,
Striking against each other; and as each
  Shrinks from the shock, back rolling with the cry,
  "Why holdest thou, why castest thou away?" 30
Thus by the gloomy circuit they return
  From every part to the point opposite,
  For ever crying out their chant obscene.
Hence each one as he gain'd the point wheel'd back
  By his own circuit to the shock again. 35
  And I with heart compassionate began —
"My master, shew me, make it plain to me
  "Who be those people: were they clerics, all
  "These on our left hand with the tonsur'd heads?"
He answer'd me—"All those were twisted so 40
  "From their right mind, in their first state of life;
  "They had, in spending, neither law nor rule
"All this their snarling voice makes manifest,
  "When to the two points of the circle come,
  "They are dissever'd by opposing sins 45

" These all were priests, upon whose head is seen
" No hair for covering, Cardinals and Popes,
" Avarice in whom had reach'd its crowning point."
Then I—" Oh, master, midst so many those,
" Are there not some whom I might recognise, 50
" Whose hands were with such evil foul'd and stain'd?"
And then he said to me—" Vain thoughts are thine,
" That life degraded, which defil'd them so,
" Against all recognition is their veil.
" The shock and counter-shock they never cease; 55
" Those from their sepulchres again will rise
" With clenched fist; and those with shaven hair,
" Ill-giving and ill-holding the fair world
" Have lost to them and placed them in this strife;
" And that to tell, fine words I need not use 60
" And now, my son, behold the folly brief
" Of the world's goods to fortune's guidance given,
" And for which men so struggle and dispute
" Not all the gold that is beneath the moon,
" Or ever was, unto these wearied souls 65
" Could give one hour of respite or of peace."
" Master," I said to him, " I pray thee say,
" What is this fortune which thou touchest on,
" And which o'er worldly goods such mastery holds?"
Then he to me—" Oh, creatures weak and blind, 70
" How ye are hinder'd by your ignorance!
" Bear thou my saying to thine inner sense

" He who is Lord, in wisdom over all,
" Made the high heav'ns and guiding angels gave,
" That from all parts to ev'ry part might shine 75
" In equal distribution the fair light,
" So in like manner one He hath ordain'd
" To guide and minister to mundane pomps,
" That the world's vanities might pass in turn
" From race to race of men, from blood to blood, 80
" From human wisdom's interference free,
" By this one nation rules, another falls,
" Foll'wing the judgment absolute of her
" Who lies conceal'd as in the grass the snake.
" In vain to rival her your wisdom strives; 85
" All she foresees, all judges, and she guides
" Her kingdom as do theirs the other gods.
" Her interchange knows neither pause nor truce;
" Her action by necessity is swift,
" For what comes oft must ever change demand. 90
" And this is she, so plac'd in heavy cross,
" That those who ought to praise her raise the cry
" Of blame and wrong and evil voice instead.
" But she is blessed, and she hears it not;
" With th' other primal creatures full of joy 95
" She rolls her sphere, is happy, and is glad.
" Let us now downwards pass to heavier woe.
" Lo, ev'ry star is sinking which arose
" When first I moved, forbidding all delay."

We cross'd the circle to the other bank, 100
  A fountain boil'd below whose waters flow'd
  Back to a fissure from itself derived.
Darker they were than purple in their hue,
  And we, close foll'wers of the gloomy wave,
  By a strange pathway downward entrance found 105
It forms a marsh, having the name of Styx,
  This sullen stream, as in its down descent
  It stays its waves at the grey rugged shore
And I, who stood intently gazing, saw
  A fangous multitude immers'd therein, 110
  All naked, and with fierce and passionate look.
They struck each other, not with hands alone,
  But with the head, and with the breast and feet,
  The raw flesh tearing with their bloody teeth
My kindly master said—" Son, now behold 115
  " The souls of those whom anger has enslav'd ;
  " And know thou this for certain that beneath
" The water there be many yet who breathe,
  " And at the surface make those bubbles rise ;
  " This thine eye tells thee as it glances round. 120
" Fix'd in the mud they say—' Cheerless we were
  " ' In the sweet air which gladdens in the sun,
  " ' Nursing within us vapours drear and dull ;
" ' Now we are cheerless in this stagnant mire.'
  " And so this chant they gurgle in their throats, 125
  " Unable to speak words entire and clear."

We thus made circuit of the filthy slough,
  Large sweeping, 'twixt the dry bank and the marsh,
  With eyes still turn'd towards the mud-bound crew.
At a tow'r's foot at length we stay'd our steps. 130

CANTO VIII.

My strain continuing, some good time before
  We reach'd the basement of this lofty tow'r,
  Our eyes were drawn towards the highest point
By two small flames plac'd there as signal lights,
  To which another answ'ring signal made, 5
  So distant scarce might eye impression take.
Then I to my full sea of wisdom turn'd,
  And ask'd—"What may this mean, what answer gives
  "That other fire? Who those who make the sign?"—
He answer'd me—"There on the obscene wave, 10
  "That which we wait for thou may'st now discern,
  "If not from thee by the marsh vapour hid."
Never by cord was arrow sped from bow,
  With flight so rapid, through the nimble air,
  As a small boat, now growing on my sight, 15
Came through the water, nearing us the while;
  One only steersman had the governance,
  Who cried—"At last thou comest, cruel soul!"

"Phlegyàs, Phlegyàs! in vain, in vain thy cry,
"For this one time." My master said—"Thou shalt
"Possess us not, except the slough to pass."
As one, the object of some great deceit,
Hears of the trick, and rages as he hears,
So did Phlegyàs rage in his gather'd wrath.
And then my guide went down into the boat,
Signing to me to enter after him;
Only when I was in this laden seem'd.
Soon as we both were seated in the bark,
The antique prow cut sharply through the waves,
Deeper than wont to do with other freight.
Whilst through that deathlike channel we made way,
One rose before me stain'd and cloth'd with mud,
And said—"Who art thou here before thy time?"
"If come," I said, "not to remain I come;
"But who art thou who so disfigur'd art?"
He answer'd—"Lo, thou! I am one who weeps."
And then I said—"In tears and in lament,
"Accursèd spirit! rest for ever thou!
"I know thee who thou art although so foul."
With both his hands he strove to seize the boat;
On which my master quickly thrust him back,
Saying,—"Begone, and herd with other dogs."
And now he clasp'd my neck with circling arms;
He kiss'd my face, and said—"Oh, scornful soul,
"Blessèd be she who bare thee in her womb.

"This one was proud and haughty in the world;
"No good he did to make his mem'ry sweet,
"Therefore his ghost rages infuriate here.
"Above how many live as mighty kings
"Who here like swine shall grovel in the mire, 60
"Leaving behind them shame and foul contempt!"
I said—"Oh, master, great is my desire
"To see him plung'd into the seething slush,
Before our course shall take us from the lake."
He answer'd me—"Before the coming shore 55
"Be ris'n to view, thou shalt be satisfied;
"It will so happen thou shalt have thy wish."
Soon after this I saw the fangous crew
Upon this wretch make such an onslaught fierce,
That I prais'd God, and still I give Him thanks. 60
"Filippo Argenti, ho!" they shouted out.
The Florentine with fierce and passionate rage,
And with his teeth on his own body turn'd.
We left him here, no more to speak of him.
But on mine ear there fell a great lament 65
Which made me forward gaze with staring eye,
And my good master said—"Lo, now my son,
"The city nears us, bearing name of Dis,
"With sin-lad'n cit'zens and a mighty host."—
"Already, master, do I see its tow'rs 70
"There in the sunken valley show themselves,
"Vermilion tinted as if sprung from flame"

And then he said to me—" Eternal fire
" Evolv'd within gives them that crimson hue
" Which thou beholdest in this lower hell " 75
And now we reach'd and enter'd the deep trench
Which girds around that land disconsolate
The walls appear'd to me of iron made
Not without many weary circuits first
Reach'd we the place where loud the pilot call'd,— 80
" Leave now the boat, for lo, the entrance here ! "
Above the gates I saw a crowd immense
Thrust down from heav'n, who angrily exclaim'd—
" Who may this be who not yet led by death
" Thus dares to brave the kingdom of the dead ?" 85
And as my all-wise master made them sign
That he with them would secret converse hold,
Then they their huge disdain did check awhile,
And said—" Come thou alone ;—let him depart
" Who insolent seeks entrance to our realm ; 90
" Let him return by the mad way alone
" If he can find it ;—thou shalt here remain
" Who wert his escort through the land of gloom."
Ah, reader, judge how great was my dismay
Ev'n at the sound of these accursèd words, 95
For of return I had no chance nor hope
" Dear guide, who through so many perils hast
" Been my sure safety, and withdrawn me safe
" From grievous dangers which have me beset,

"Leave me not thus," I said, "undone and lost, 100
"If to go further be denied us, then
"Let us together backwards take our way."
My lord, whose guidance brought me to this place,
Said to me—"Fear not; to our onward course
"None can give hindrance,—One hath made it fate. 105
"But wait thou here and let thy spirit weak
"Gain strength and comfort from the food of hope:
"I will not fail thee in this nether world."
And so he went and left me there alone,
My gentle father! and I doubtful wait, 110
My head debating whether Yes or No.
What he propos'd to them I could not hear,
But he remain'd with them the briefest space,
For each with struggling haste return'd within.
Then these our adversaries clos'd the gates 115
Against my master's breast, who, left without,
Turn'd back towards me with unwilling steps,
With downcast eyes, and brow from which was gone
All courage; midst his heavy sighs he said,
"Who bars our entrance to the home of pain?" 120
And then he said to me—"Be not dismay'd
"Because mine anger; I shall conquer yet,
"Whatever hindrance they within may dare
"To me their insolence is no new thing;
"They tried it once at a less secret gate, 125
"Which now remains without or bolt or bar;

" Thou sawest over it the scroll of death.
" Ev'n now, this side of it, down the sad steep
" Passing through all the circles guidance free,
" One comes through whom the city open lies." 130

CANTO IX.

That coward hue which outwardly I shew'd
  When I perceiv'd my master thus turn back,
  More quickly inward his new colour drove
Like one who listens he attentive paus'd,
  For vainly might his eye far forward pierce 5
  Through the black air and through the heavy fog
"'Tis ours to conquer in the fight," he said;
  "If not!—yet mighty is the proffer'd help.
  "How slow to me until the other come!"
I noted well how he had inly chang'd 10
  His first thought for another after thought,
  Making his last words differ from his first.
Yet what he said not less arous'd my fear,
  For from his maim'd and broken speech I drew
  Perchance a meaning worse than it might bear. 15
"Into the depths of this sad hollow, say,
  "From the first circle cometh any one
  "Whose only punishment is hopeless hope?"

Thus questioning, I asked him, and he said,—
" Rarely indeed it happens that of us 20
" One ever makes the journey now I make.
Once, it is true, this nether world I trod,
" By cruel Erictho's sorceries hither lur'd,
" Who to their bodies conjur'd spirits back
" I had not long put off my guise of flesh 25
" Ere she had made me pass within those walls
" To bring a spirit thence from Judas' place.
" This is the lowest place and gloomy most,
" Furthest from heav'n, which circling, rules the whole.
" Well do I know the way; have then no fear. 30
" The marsh, which foul and fœtid stench exhales,
" Girdles the city dolorous about,
" And there we cannot enter without ire."
He further spake, but I recall it not,
For my whole earnest gaze was upward drawn 35
Tow'rds the red summit of the lofty tow'r,
Where on a point I suddenly beheld
Three Furies born of hell and stain'd with blood,
Who female members had and woman's form.
Hydras of brightest green engirt them round, 40
Serpents they had for hair and horned snakes,
By which their cruel temples were entwin'd.
And he, who well indeed the handmaids knew
Of her, the queen of everlasting woe,
Said unto me—" Behold th' Erynnys fierce! 45

" This is Megæra standing on the left;
" She on the right hand weeping is Alecto,
" Tisiphone between," and then he ceas'd.
Each with her nails wounded and tore her breast;
With raging palms they smote themselves; their cries 50
Made me in trembling to the poet cling.
" Medusa, ho! let him be turn'd to stone!"
They all exclaimed, towards me looking down,
" Theseus' assault too lightly we avenge."—
" Turn, turn thee back, hold thou thy vision clos'd, 55
" For if the Gorgon look and thou shouldst see,
" Never thou tread'st again the upper world."
So spake my master, and he wheel'd me round,
And to my hands alone he would not trust,
Till with his own hands he had cover'd mine. 60
Oh ye, who sound intelligence possess,
Admire the doctrine which lies hidden here
Beneath the veil of the strange song I sing!
And then there came across the turbid wave
The rushing of a sound so full of dread 65
That the two shores with very trembling shook;
Like was it to a fierce and mighty wind,
Which, born impetuous of opposing heats,
The forest strikes with pow'r disdaining check;
It breaks the branches, tears them, flings them forth; 70
Onward it rushes, dust compelling, proud;
Wild beasts and shepherds flee before its rage

He said, mine eyes uncov'ring,—" Turn the edge
" Of thy keen vision o'er that old grey scum,
" Where the smoke rises with more stifling pow'r " 75
As frogs, when fleeing from their serpent foe,
In their alarm rush splashing through the wave,
Till at the dry land each is heap'd again,
So did I witness countless ruin'd souls
Flee fearful before one who, at the ford, 80
Pass'd with dry footing o'er the stream of Styx.
He from his face dispers'd the heavy air
With frequent action, moving his left hand;
And from that suff'ring seem'd alone distress'd.
That he was sent from heaven I soon perceiv'd; 85
So as I turn'd, my master made me sign
That I should silence hold and homage do.
And, lo! how full he seem'd of proud disdain,
The gate he reaches, strikes it with a rod,
And wide it flies; resistance there was none. 90
" Oh, chas'd from heaven, oh, people base and vile!"
Thus on the fearful threshold he began;—
" To this presumption who has you sedne'd?
" Why are you restive thus against that will
" Which never fails in its accomplishment, 95
" And has so often multiplied your woes?
" What profits it to kick against the fates?
" Your Cerberus, if good remembrance holds,
" Still bears the wound upon his chin and throat."

Then by the foul and filthy way he turn'd, 100
  Taking no note of us, but bearing mark
  Of one constrain'd and bound by other care
Than that of him who in his presence stands.
  And now towards the place we onward mov'd,
  Safe and secure after these holy words; 105
Therein we enter'd without fight or check;
  And I who long'd to make observance full
  Of that close fortress and its inner state,
Being now within, cast eye attentive round,
  And saw on ev'ry side a mighty plain, 110
  With heavy grief and guilty torment fill'd
Ev'n as at Arles, where stagnant flows the Rhone,
  Or as at Pola to Quarnaro nigh,
  Which closes Italy and bathes her bounds,
The land is rough and broken up with tombs; 115
  So in like manner here on ev'ry side,
  But with a bitt'rer horror in the mode
For scatter'd 'midst the graves flames issued forth,
  Which wide extending gave so fierce a heat,
  No art in iron might such heat require 120
Uncover'd all, their lids were lifted up,
  And forth from them there came such dire laments,
  Truly they spoke of misery and of sin.
"Oh master," then I said, "who may they be,
  "Who, buried in these tombs, so make the air 125
  "Resound and echo with their mournful sighs?"

He answer'd me—" Heresiarchs are these
" By whom and by their foll'wers of all sects,
" More than seems credible, these tombs are fill'd.
" Here like with like is buried, and the tombs 130
" Are heated,—some are more and others less "
Then to the right hand turning face we pass'd
'Twixt the tormented souls and lofty walls

CANTO X.

Now pressing onward by a narrow way
  'Twixt the tormented souls and city walls,
  My master went, I treading in his steps.
" Oh, thou most virtuous, who those zones of sin
  " Me movest through, as to thee pleasest best, 5
  " Speak now," I said, " and my desires fulfil.
" Those who within the sepulchres are laid,
  " May they be seen!—Already lifted up
  " Are all the lids, and no one keepeth guard."
He answer'd me, " All shall be close confin'd, 10
  " When, judg'd at Josaphat, they shall return
  " Cloth'd with the bodies which they left above.
" Behold, on this side are the tombs in which
  " Rest Epicurus and his foll'wers all,
  " Who, with the body, also slay the soul. 15
" But that request which thou now makest me
  " Therein thou quickly shalt be satisfied,
  " And also in the wish thou hast conceal'd."—

" Dear guide, from thee I do not hide my heart,"
  I said, " but that I would not say too much, 20
  " And thou thyself thereto hast me dispos'd "—
" Oh, Tuscan! who thus living passest through
  " The fiery city in such fitting talk,
  " May it now please thee here to rest awhile;
" Thou to me by thy language makest clear 25
  " That thou art native of that noble land
  " With which perhaps too roughly I have dealt."
This sudden utt'rance issued from a tomb,
  One of the many, so I closer drew,
  Somewhat in fear, towards my leader's side 30
And he thus spake, " Turn thee, what doest thou?
  " Behold thou, Farinata, self-upraised;
  " Him from his cincture upwards thou shalt see."
Already on his face my look was fix'd;
  And he his breast and forehead lifted high, 35
  As if in haughty scorn of Hell itself.
And then my guide, with bold and ready hand,
  Thrust me towards him, 'twixt the sepulchres,
  Saying, " Thy words, let them be clearly told."
Soon as I reach'd the margin of his tomb, 40
  Eyeing me for a moment as in scorn,
  He ask'd, " Thy ancestors—who were they? Speak?"
I, who had great desire to meet his wish,
  Nothing conceal'd, but plainly told him all.
  Lifting his eyebrows with a higher curve, 45

He said, "Most cruelly they were oppos'd
"To me, my party, and my ancestry,
"So twice it was I scatter'd them abroad."—
"If scatter'd, they returned from ev'ry point"
I answer'd him, "both first and second time;
"But yours have still small knowledge of this art."
Then there arose to my uncover'd view
A ghost, as this one long, seen to the chin,
Seeming as if uprisen on his knees,
He search'd around me as with longing wish
To see if any one were with me there;
But when his thought suspicious was remov'd
Weeping he said, "If by thy genius high
"Thou passest through this prison drear and dark,
"My son! Where is he? Wherefore not with thee?"
And then I said, "Not of myself I came,
"But hither led by him who yonder waits,
"And him perhaps thy Guido had disdain'd."
The words he spake, the nature of his woe,
Had quickly giv'n me knowledge of his name;
And so my answer was complete and full.
With sudden spring he upright was, and cried,—
"Say'st thou he had, doth he no longer live?
"Look not his eyes upon the pleasant light?"
When he perceiv'd that I made some delay
Before I render'd answer, lo! he fell
Backward supine, and forth no more he came,

But he, magnanimous, who held me stay'd
  Upon the spot, chang'd not his aspect high,
  Mov'd not his neck, bent not his haughty chest; 75
"And if," in furtherance of his first remark,
  "They have that art," he said, "so badly learn'd,
  "That gives me torment more than ev'n this bed
"But mark! not fifty times shall the queen's face,
  "Who ruleth here, be lit by fire renew'd, 80
  "Ere thou shalt know how much that art is worth;
"And so thou may'st again the sweet world tread,
  "Tell me why yet that people are so fierce
  "In ev'ry law against myself and mine?"
I answer'd him—"The slaughter and great strife 85
  "Which dyed of crimson hue the Arbia's wave,
  "Such sounds of counsel in our temples wak'd."
Then sighing heavily his head he shook:
  "Yet I was not alone," he said, "nor yet
  "Had without reason with the others mov'd, 90
"But I alone it was who, when each gave
  "His vote that Florence should no more exist,
  "Boldly and openly stood forth her friend."—
"Then to thy race may it be long repose,"
  This was my pray'r, "so that thou solvest me 95
  "That which my mind hath so involv'd and bound.
"It seems to me, if I have heard aright,
  "That thou canst prophecy the future time,
  "But of the present time no knowledge hast"—

"Like those of doubtful vision we can see," 100
He answer'd me, "things which be far remov'd;
"So much to us the King Eternal grants.
"When things come near us, when they touch us, then
"Our intellect is nought, we nothing know
"Of human things but that which others tell. 105
"Therefore thou comprehendest that all lost
"And dead becomes our knowledge at that point
"Which of the future closes up the gate."
Then with compunction at my fault o'ercome
I spoke:—"But to this fallen one, O say 110
"That yet his son with living men consorts.
"If I was silent to his fond request,
"Make him to know that then my thoughts were full
"Touching the error thou hast me resolv'd."
And now my master call'd me to return, 115
So I more pressingly the spirit pray'd
That he would tell me who with him were bound.
He said—"With numbers countless here I lie;
"The second Frederick is here, and he
"The cardinal; silent I pass the rest." 120
He disappear'd, and back I turn'd my steps
Towards the ancient poet, in my mind
Revolving words which threat'ning seem'd in tone.
Forward he mov'd, and as we held our course
He said to me—"Why art thou so cast down?" 125
And then did I his question satisfy.

" Hold thou in mem'ry that which thou hast heard
  " Adverse to thee ," so was his high command,
  With finger rais'd , " and now attention give :
" When thou shalt stand before the radiance sweet 130
  " Of her whose eyes of beauty all things see,
  " Of thy life's journey thou from her shalt learn."
Then to the left hand turning on he went.
  Leaving the walls, we at the centre pass'd
  Down by a path which to a valley led, 135
From whence a stench unbearable arose.

CANTO XI.

On a steep precipice's upper edge,
  In circle form'd by huge disjointed stones,
  We came upon a mass of deeper woe
And here so horrible became the stench
  Which the profound abyss projected forth, 5
  That we approach'd it shelter'd by the lid
Of a great tomb, whereon I written saw
  These words—"Pope Anastasius I hold,
  "Whom from the path of truth Photinus drew"—
"Slow must be our descent that so our sense 10
  "May be accustom'd somewhat to the blast,
  "Fœtid and heavy, and regard it not."
Thus spoke my master, and I answer made,—
  "Find thou some subject that the time may pass
  "Not profitless" "This was my thought," he said 15
"My son, those rocks within," so he began,
  "Are the now lessen'd circles which descend
  "By just degrees like unto those we left

"All these are peopled by accursèd souls;
"But that the sight alone may thee suffice,
"List how and why they are in such constraint.
"Of ev'ry malice which just heav'n abhors,
"To injure is the end; and each such end,
"Either by force or fraud, makes others grieve.
"But since of man fraud is the proper sin,
"More it displeases God, and so beneath
"Are plac'd the fraudulent with heavier pains.
"The violent only the first circle claim;
"But since to persons three offence is done
"It is divided into portions three,—
"To God, to self, our neighbour, it may chance
"That wrong is done, to them and to their goods,
"As thou shalt know by demonstration clear.
"By violence, death, by great and grievous wounds
"Man wrongs his neighbour, and his goods he wastes
"By ruin, fire, and shameful robberies;
"Hence slayers of men, hence each who foully wounds,
"Spoilers and robbers, these all torment find
"In the first circle, rang'd in separate rank.
"Man on himself may violence commit,
"And on his goods; so in the second round
"In effort vain he must repentance seek.
"Whoever bars himself from your fair world,
"Gambles, his substance squanders, or who weeps
"When it is surely meant he should rejoice,

" And there be those who violence do to God
" By unbelief of heart and blasphemy,
" By scorning Nature and her bounties great;
" And thus the lesser circle puts its mark
" On Sodom, on Cahors, on ev'ry one 60
" Who God disdains, and scorns him in his heart.
" That fraud, which sharply ev'ry conscience bites,
" Man against those who trust in him may use,
" Or against those by whom no trust is giv'n.
" This latter seems to rend in twain the bond 65
" Which Nature in her love for us hath made;
" Whence in the second circle such are held,
" Magic, hypocrisy, and flatterers,
" Vile falsehood, robbery and simony,
" Panders and Usurers, and such foul stuff 69
" But by the former is that love renounc'd
" Which Nature gives, and whence so sweetly springs
" The full and special confidence of faith.
" Hence in the lesser circle where is plac'd
" The centre universal, seat of Dis, 65
" Him who betrays eternal woe consumes."
Then I—" Oh master, clear to me, indeed,
" Thy reasons are, and clear are pointed out
" This gulf, and those who its possession hold.
" But tell thou me—those of the fungous marsh, 70
" Those driv'n by the wind, those strick'n by the rain,
" Those who with words so bitter fight and jar,

" Why are not they in the Fire City barr'd,
" If they be held in the great wrath of God?
" But if not held, why in such heavy woe?" 75
And then he said—" Why from its wonted calm
" Passes thy judgment to such fancy wild?
" Why turns thy mind to such erratic thoughts?
" Hast thou, then, lost remembrance of those words
" With which the volume of thine ethics treats, 80
" Of the three states by heav'n forbid to man,—
" Incontinence, and malice, and the mad
" Bestiality, and how incontinence
" Offends God less, and less his blame receives?
" If thou regardest well what this may mean, 85
" And to thy mem'ry callest who be those,
" Who there without sustain their chastisement,
" Then shalt thou see why from these wicked souls
" Sever'd they are, and though tormented, why
" Justice divine strikes them with lesser blow."— 90
" Oh, sun! thou healer of the troubled sight,
" What thou declarest makes me so content,
" That as in knowledge I rejoice in doubt.
" Turn then around, I pray thee, backward look
" There where thou sayest usury gives offence 95
" To goodness infinite, and the knot untie."
" Philosophy," he said, " th' observant mind,
" Teaches this truth, not in one place alone,
" That Nature takes her method and her course

" From the divine intelligence and art, 100
" And if thy physics thou hast studied well,
" Then thou before thou readest far shalt find
" That this thy art, so far as it hath pow'r,
" Follows as pupil in his master's steps;
" So of God's child thine art seems almost child 105
" From these two, then, if thou in mem'ry hold'st
" The earlier Genesis, it is decreed
" That life must spring, and man's increase must come
" But then the usurer treads another path,
" Nature and her attendant both he scorns, 110
" Since in another means he places hope
" Now follow me, it pleaseth me to turn;
" For lo! the fishes in th' horizon play,
" And in the north-west lies the wain entire,
" And the steep rock waits there for our descent." 115

CANTO XII.

The place where now our steep descent began
  Was wild and rugged, and that, too, was there
  Which ev'ry eye would shrinking seek to shun.
As is that ruin which upon the flank
  Of the Adigè struck, on this side Trent, 5
  From shock of earthquake or defective stay,
By which, from the high crest whence downward hurl'd
  Towards the plain, so shatter'd is the rock
  That he who would descend no footing finds;
So was that precipice to our descent. 10
  And there upon the point of the rent cliff
  Lay stretchèd out the infamy of Crete,
Of the vile heifer counterfeit conceiv'd.
  And when it saw us, then it bit itself,
  As one with fierce and weary anger torn. 15
My sage, addressing it, exclaim'd—"'Tis like
  "Thou thinkest here the Duke of Athens stands,
  "Who in the world gave thee the stroke of death.

"Foul beast, avaunt! for this one cometh not
"Forc'd by thy sister's mastery to come, 20
"But that he might thy chastisement behold"
As the strong bull with sudden plunge breaks loose
The instant he receives the mortal stroke,
And giddy this way, that way, staggers wild;
In manner like I saw the Minotaur 25
My guide loud warning cried—"Haste to the pass
"Whilst in his rage; 'tis well thou goest down."
So we went downwards to the gather'd heap
Of loose and ragged stones which frequent mov'd
Under my feet as the new pressure fell; 30
I deeply thinking, whilst he said—"Thy thoughts,
"Perhaps, are of that ruin under guard
"Of that rage bestial I but now controll'd.
"I will thou shouldst know, the former time
"I here descended to the depths of hell, 35
"This rock was not yet shatter'd and thrown down;
"But of a truth, if I discern aright,
"Short space before He came who bore from Dis
"A mighty booty in the upper zone,
"Lo, ev'ry part of the foul valley's depths 40
"So trembl'd, that the universe, methought,
"Had felt that love by which, as some believe,
"The world has many times to Chaos pass'd,
"And at that moment did this ancient rock,
"Here and elsewhere, such mighty ruin make. 45

" But downwards on the valley fix thine eyes,
" For the blood-river nears us in the which
" Seethe all who others violence have done."
Oh, blinded greediness! oh, foolish rage!
Which spur us so in the short world of life, 50
And then in death so drown us in despair!
I saw an ample trench bending in curve,
Like unto that which the whole plain embrac'd,
And this my escort hath already shown.
'Twixt the rock's foot and it, in single line, 55
Centaurs careering ran with arrows arm'd,
As in the world men go unto the chase.
As we descended, each one check'd his course,
And from the troop detach'd three forward came
With bows and arrows ready for offence, 60
And one still distant cried—"Ye who descend
" The cliff, unto what torment do ye come?
" Speak now, or lo! I send mine arrow forth."
My master said—"Our answer we will give
" To Chiron, for he yonder standeth near, 65
" Evil was always born of thy quick will."
And then he touch'd me, saying—"Nessus this,
" He who for Dejanira's beauty died,
" And who himself his own revenge prepar'd;
" He in the middle, stooping as in thought, 70
" Is the great Chiron, who Achilles rear'd,
" The other Pholas, ever slave to wrath."

Around the trench do they in thousands pass,
  Shooting each soul which strives itself to drag
  Forth from the blood more than its doom of sin. 75
Nearer we came to these swift-footed beasts;
  An arrow Chiron took, and with the notch
  From the jaws backward threw his flowing beard.
Having uncover'd his huge mouth, he said
  To his companions—"Lo! yon, look and mark 80
  "Who comes behind, he what he touches moves,
"Feet of the dead are not so wont to do."
  And my kind guide, who to his breast was near
  Where the two natures are in one conjoin'd,
Answer'd—"'Tis true he lives, and I alone 85
  "May lead and guide him through this vale of gloom;
  "Necessity compels him, not delight.
"She who forsook the Hallelujah song
  "Hath this new office giv'n to me in trust;
  "No robber he, and I no guilty soul. 90
"But by that puissance by the which I move
  "My footsteps through this wild and savage way,
  "Give unto us for escort one of thine,
"And let him show to us where is the ford,
  "And on his back be this one onward borne, 95
  "He is no spirit who through air can go."
Then to the right hand Chiron bent his head,
  And said to Nessus—"Turn and be their guide;
  "Drive off the others if they hindrance dare."

With this trustworthy escort on we mov'd 100
Along the edge of the vermilion flood,
Wherein the seething crew with anguish yell'd.
There I saw many to the eyebrows plung'd,
And the great Centaur said—"Tyrants are these,
"Whose trade was blood and the fierce lust of spoil. 105
"Here they lament in woe their cruel wrongs,
"Here Alexander, Dionysius there,
"Who gave to Sicily many mourning years;
"That brow on which thou see'st the hair so black
"Is Azzolin, the other, who is fair, 110
"Obizzo d'Estè,—let the truth be told,—
"Slain by his stepson in the world above."
Then as I to the poet turn'd, he spake—
"Be thou the first, the second I in place."
A short way on the Centaur checked his course 115
Where a great multitude down to the throat
Out of the seething flood their bodies rais'd.
There pointing to a solitary ghost,
He said—"He clove in God's own house the heart
"Which on the shores of Thames still rev'rence claims." 120
Then I saw numbers who above the stream
Held up the head and ev'n the trunk entire;
And of these many I could recognise.
Thus by degrees less deeply roll'd the blood,
Till to the feet alone it cov'ring gave, 125
And here our passage through the fosse was made.

" Whilst on this side the seething flood becomes
" As now thou see'st, more shallow in its flow,"
The Centaur said, " this, too, thou must believe,
" That deep and deeper on the other side 130
" Its bed it presses till once more it joins
" Where tyranny for doom deserved groans.
" There divine justice stings with torture sharp
" That Attila who of the world was scourge,
" Pyrrhus and Sextus, and eternal tears 135
" Forces to flow, which the hot flood sets free,
" From Rinier Pazzo and Corneto both,
" Who on earth's highways made such evil strife."
Then he turn'd back and passed again the ford.

CANTO XIII

Nessus had scarcely reach'd the further side,
  When we were moving onwards through a wood,
  In which no pathway sign, or guidance gave.
No verdant leaves, but colour dark and dull;
  No branches smooth, but knotty and involv'd; 5
  No fruits were there, but poisonous thorns instead.
So rough and stern a brushwood, and so dense,
  Know not those savage beasts which, in dislike,
  The fields 'twixt Cecina and Corneto shun.
Here do the bestial harpies build their nests, 10
  Which from the Strophades the Trojans chas'd,
  Of coming evil with prognostic dire.
With spreading wings, with human necks and heads,
  Claws on their feet, feather'd their paunches gross;
  They make lament upon the ghostly trees. 15
And the kind master, "Ere thou ent'rest here,
  "Know in the second circle now thou art,"
  So he began, "and shalt be till the time,

" When to the sands of horror thou art come.
" Note therefore well, and things thou shalt behold 20
" Which will bring faith and credit to my words."
I heard groans issue forth from ev'ry side,
And no one saw who could the utterance give;
So that I paus'd, all startl'd and amaz'd.
I deem'd that he believ'd 'twas my belief, 25
Those voices many, from amidst the trunks
Came forth from those whom fear of us conceal'd.
Then said the master, " If thou breakest off
" From any plant of those one little branch,
" The thoughts thou hast will all be vain and naught." 30
Then I stretch'd forth my hand a little space,
And a small twig from a rough thorn I pluck'd,
And its trunk cried, " Why dost thou rend me thus?"
And as the dark blood of my action flow'd,
" Why dost thou tear me thus?" again it cried, 35
" Hast thou no spirit of pity in thy breast?"
" Men once we were, now are we plants become,
" Should not thy hand more pitiful have been,
" Ev'n if of serpents we had been the souls?"
As in the green wood brand, which, while it burns 40
At the one end, yet at the other sighs,
And crackles as the air is passing out,
From the torn surface, so together came
Both words and blood, and I let fall the twig,
And stood like one o'ercome with sudden fear. 45

" Had he before been able to believe,"
The sage then answer'd, " Oh, thou wounded soul!
" What he already in my verse has seen,
" He would not then have laid on thee his hand;
" But so incredible the thing, my act 50
" Led him to do what to myself gives pain.
" But tell him who thou wert, that so he may,
" Instead of all amends, thy fame refresh
" In th' upper world, when licens'd to return."
The trunk then spake, " So sweet thy words attract, 55
" Silence I cannot hold, be not aggriev'd,
" That so allur'd I briefly now discourse.
" I am the man to whom 'twas given to hold,
" Both keys of Frederick's heart, and who its wards
" Unclos'd and clos'd, and this with act so soft, 60
" That from all others I his trust withdrew,
" So high my glorious office I sustain'd,
" That, holding it, I lost both peace and life
" The strumpet who from Cæsar's palace walls
" Not for a moment turns her eyes corrupt, 65
" That common death, that vice and curse of courts,
" Against me ev'ry spirit so inflam'd,
" That they inflam'd Augustus with their flame,
" Till my glad honours turn'd to sorrowing woe.
" Fill'd with indignant scorn, my wounded soul, 70
" Thinking by death contempt and shame to flee,
" To self injustice did, though just myself

" By the new roots, which strike beneath this tree,
" I swear to you my faith I never broke
" To him, my lord, worthy of honour great. 75
" And if you either to the world return,
" Relieve my mem'ry, which still hurden'd lies
" With the foul stroke to it by envy given."
He ceas'd awhile, and then the poet said,
" Whilst he is silent, lose not thou the time, 80
" But speak and ask of him what more thou wouldst."
On this I said, " Be it to thee to ask,
" What still thou thinkest may my thoughts content;
" I cannot ask, pity so wrings my heart"
He then resum'd, " So may he freely grant 85
" That comfort which thy strong entreaty craves,
" Imprison'd Spirit, let it please thee still
" To tell us how the soul can thus be bound
" Within these gnarlèd trees, say if thou canst,
" If of such limbs one ever loos'd the chain" 90
With effort great then breath'd the trunk, and soon
That breath to voice articulate was chang'd;
" Brief now shall be the answer to thy quest.
" When from the body the fierce soul departs,
" And is uprooted thus by its own act, 95
" Minos remits it to the seventh depth.
" Into the wood it falls, at no fix'd spot;
" But where blind fortune haply shoots its bolt,
" There like a grain of corn it germinates;

" Upward it shoots, a forest plant it grows, 100
" And then the harpies feeding on its leaves,
" Give to it pain and to the pain escape.
" We come like others for our mortal spoils,
" But of a truth none can be therewith cloth'd;
" What torn from self man may not justly hold 105
" Here we shall drag them, and our bodies shall
" In the wood sorrowful suspended be,
" Each to the thorn of its injurious shade."
Still on the trunk our close attent was fix'd,
Thinking it wish'd of other things to speak; 110
When we were startl'd by a sudden noise,
Like one who from his station feels the sound
Of the wild boar and his hot chase advance,
And hears the wild beasts cry, the branches crash
So from the left side torn and naked came, 115
Two rushing onward with such headlong flight,
They brake all check or hindrance of the wood
He who was foremost cried, " Help, help, oh death!"
The other, who seemed slower in his speed,
Shouted, " Oh, Lano! not so agile thou 120
" When thy limbs master'd thee at Toppo's jousts."
And then, perchance because his breathing fail'd,
Himself and cov'ring bush one group became.
Behind them stretched lay the forest, full
Of she-dogs, hungry, black, and scouring wild, 125
Like greyhounds suddenly from chains unloos'd

They fix'd their fangs on him who hidden lay,
  Tore him to pieces, rending limb from limb,
  And then away the quivering members bore.
And then mine escort took me by the hand, 120
  And led me to the bush which vainly wept
  From every scarified and bleeding pore
" Jacopo of Sant-Andrea," it cried,
  " How help'd it thee to make me thy defence,
  " What share of guilt was mine in thy foul life ?" 125
Then pausing o'er it, thus my master spake—
  " Say, who wert thou who, from so many points,
  " With blood and anguish breathest out thy speech ?"
And thus he answer'd us, " Oh souls arriv'd
  " This most dishon'ring outrage to behold, 130
  " Which from my leaves myself hath so disjoin'd,
" Heap them, I pray you, round the sad shrub's foot.
  " That city mine, which for the Baptist chang'd
  " Its earlier Patron ; and in this was made
" To feel in sadness what His pow'r could do. 135
  " And did there not remain at Arno's Bridge
  " Some remnant of him to recal the thought,
" Those citizens who founded it anew,
  " Above the ruins left by Attila,
  " In their new labour would have worked in vain 140
" Of my own house my gibbet I prepar'd."

CANTO XIV.

Since the great love I bore my native place
  Constrain'd me, I amass'd the scatter'd leaves,
  Restoring them to him who now was hoarse.
Then we arriv'd at the just point which parts
  The second circle from the third, and where 5
  Justice in manner horrible is seen.
To make these new events distinct and clear,
  We reach'd, I say, a wide uncultur'd plain,
  No plant upon whose surface found its bed.
The dol'rous forest girdl'd it around 10
  As by the sorrowful moat itself encurt;
  And here we paus'd grazing the very edge
The soil of this was dense and arid sand,
  Form'd not unlike in fashion to that plain
  Which by the feet of Cato once was press'd. 15
Oh, God's great vengeance! with what heavy dread
  Thou should'st be fear'd by ev'ry one who reads
  What to mine eyes so manifest was made!

Of souls uncloth'd I saw a mighty mass,
  Who, every one, most miserably wept, 20
  And each seem'd subject to a diff'rent law.
Many upon the ground were stretch'd supine;
  Some with their bodies bent and doubl'd sate,
  With ceaseless movement others went and came.
Those who thus mov'd about number'd the most, 25
  Fewer were those who under torments lay,
  But they gave freer utterance to their woe
Over the sand entire with a slow fall
  Rain'd down broad flakes of fire, as falls the snow
  Upon the Alps when the wild wind is still. 30
Such were the flames which Alexander saw
  In the hot parts of Ind upon his host
  Descend, and to the earth unquenchèd fall;
He in his foresight trampl'd down the soil
  Under his squadrons, since the vaporous fire 35
  Was best extinguish'd while as yet alone;
So here descended the eternal heat,
  The sand, by which inflam'd, as under flint
  The tinder burns, a double suff'ring caus'd.
No rest there was to the unceasing play 40
  Of the most wretched hands, which on all sides
  Strove to shake off the ever falling flame.
Then I began—"Oh, master, who hast pow'r
  "O'er all things, saving those demoniacs fierce,
  "Who to our purpose barr'd the entrance gate! 45

" Who is that mighty one, to whom the fire
" Appears no care, who grim and spiteful lies
" By the maturing show'r seeming untouch'd ?"
And this same one, who with quick notice saw
That it was he of whom I asked the chief, 50
Exclaim'd—" What I was living, am I dead !
" Were Jove his great artificer to tire,
" From whom enrag'd he seiz'd the piercing bolt,
" On that last day when I was stricken down ;
" Were he the others each to tire by turn, 55
" At Mongibello, at the blacken'd forge,
" Crying—Good Vulcan, grant me, grant me help !
" As at the fight of Flegra forc'd to do ;
" Were he on me his fiercest darts to hurl,
" He should not win from me a vengeance glad." 60
Then spake my leader, and his words were stern—
Never till then had I so heard him speak ;
" Oh, Capaneus ! because thou hast not check'd
" Thy haughty pride, thou art thus punish'd more ;
" No martyrdom but thine own rage insane 65
" Shall for thy fury be a torment full."
And then he turn'd, and with a gentler look
He said—" This of the seven kings was one
" Who Thebes besieg'd, and had, and seems to have
" Jove in disdain ; to him scant pray'r he makes, 70
" But as I told him, his despite alone
" Serves to his heart due ornament to bring

" Now follow me, and see that still thy feet
" Thou placest not upon the scorching sand,
" But hold thou close unto the shelt'ring wood." 75
In silence we arriv'd where rushes forth
From out the wood a little rivulet,
Whose redness fills me still with sickening dread.
From Bulicamè as the streamlet runs,
Which 'mong themselves the sinning women share, 80
So downward through the sand did this one flow.
Its bed and both its banks were form'd of stone,
As were its edges upon either side,
So I perceiv'd that here our passage lay.
" Among all else which I to thee have shown, 85
" Since we our entrance made within the gate,
" Of which the threshold is to none denied,
" Thine eyes have nothing seen so full of strange
" And wond'ring notice as this present stream,
" Quenching above it all those fiery flakes." 90
Such were the words which now my leader spake,
Therefore I pray'd him to enlarge the feast,
Of which the longing he had so enlarg'd.
" In the sea's bosom lies a wasted land,"
So then he said, " bearing the name of Crete, 95
" Under whose monarch once the world was chaste.
" A mountain rises there which once was glad
" With wood and water—Ida it is nam'd—
" Now desert, like a thing worn out and old.

" This Rhea chose a cradle fit and safe 100
" For her new born, and better to conceal
" When the babe wept, with noise she drown'd his cries.
" Within the mountain stands a great old man
" Upright, his back tow'rds Damiata turn'd,
" His face as to its mirror turn'd to Rome. 105
" And lo! of finest gold his head is form'd,
" Of purest silver are his arms and breast;
" And then of brass his body to the thighs;
" From thence all downwards is of iron wrought,
" Save that the right foot is of potter's clay, 110
" On which more than the left erect he stands.
" Riven is ev'ry part—save where of gold—
" By a great fissure, from which tears distil,
" And these collecting through this grotto pierce.
" Along the vale they take their rocky course; 115
" Styx, Acheron, and Phlegethon they form;
" Then by this narrow conduit pass away.
" At last where further down they cannot flow,
" They form Cocytus; something of that lake
" Thou yet shalt see, we speak not of it now." 120
I said to him—" But if this little stream
" Is in such manner from our world deriv'd,
" Why do we see it at this edge alone?"
He answer'd me—" Thou know'st the place a sphere,
" And though thou hast much of thy passage made 125
" On the left ever sinking to the depths,

" Thou hast not yet round the whole circle turo'd ;
" Therefore if unto thee things new appear,
" This need not to thy face amazement bring."
Again I said—" Master, where may be found 130
" Lethe and Phlegethon ; silent thou on one,
" Thou sayest the other of this rain is formed ?"
" Thy questions truly please me," he replied ,
" But still the bubbling of this crimson flood
" Should have resolv'd one question thou hast ask'd. 135
" Thou shalt see Lethe, but outside this depth,
" There where the souls to cleanse themselves repair,
" When of their sins repentant and discharg'd."
And then he said—" Now let us leave the wood,
" 'Tis time ; see after me thou follow'st close, 140
" Those edges form our path which are not burnt,
" And over them is ev'ry vapour quench'd."

CANTO XV.

One of the rocky margins bears us on,
  And the stream's vapour shadows all above,
  So banks and water from the fire are safe
As twixt Cattàno and Bruges the Flemings raise,
  Fearing the wave which towards them threat'ning rolls, 5
  The cov'ring dyke, and so the sea escape;
Or as the Paduans on the Brenta's banks
  Their towns and castles labour to defend,
  Ere the heat strikes on Chiarentana's heights;
Such was the fashion in which those were form'd, 10
  Though not in bulk so lofty nor so wide,
  Whoe'er he was, the master made them so!
We were already distant from the wood
  So far, its very place I had not seen
  Ev'n had I turn'd me round entire to look, 15
When we encounter'd a great troop of souls,
  Who came along the mound, and each one look'd
  Closely at us, as one another scan

Those who at evening meet at the new moon;
They gaz'd on us with keen and fixed gaze,
As the old tailor on his needle's eye.
Thus being ey'd and by so vast a crowd,
One recognis'd me, and he plac'd his grasp
On my robe's hem, and cried—"A marvel, lo!"
And I, when he towards me stretch'd his arm,
So fix'd mine eyes upon his aspect burnt,
That though his face was scarr'd, it hinder'd not
My full intelligence of who he was;
And stooping, so that face to face we stood,
I answer'd—"Ser Brunetto, art thou here?"
On which he said—"My son, be not displeas'd
"If Brunetto Latini turn some space
"Backward with thee, whilst onward files the troop."
I said to him—"I pray thee all I can,
"And if thou wishest that with thee I sit,
"His pleasure who is with me must decide."
"Oh, son," he said, "he of this troop who stops
"But for a moment, lies a hundred years
"Pow'rless to struggle when the fire assails.
"Then onward go; I at thy skirts will come,
"And afterwards my company rejoin,
"Who go bewailing their eternal woes."
I did not dare the pathway to descend
To step beside him; but I bent my head
Low as a man who reverently walks.

" What destiny or fortune," he began,
" Has brought thee here before thy final hour?
" And who is he who shews to thee the road?"
" Above us in the life serene," I said,
" I in a valley wand'ring lost my way, 50
" Before mine age of manhood was complete.
" From thence but yestermorn I turn'd my steps,
" And whilst returning, this one I beheld,
" And by this road he leads me home again."
And then he spake—" Follow thou but thy star, 55
" A glorious port thou canst not fail to win,
" If I saw clearly in life's beauteous time.
" And had not so untimely been my death,
" As the high heavens on thee so kindly look,
" I would have strengthen'd thee in thy great work. 60
" But that ungrateful people and malign,
" Who of old time from Fiesole came down,
" And still its cold and rocky nature bear,
" Will thee more evil do for all thy good;
" And this the reason, midst th' astringent crabs 65
" It is not suited the sweet fig should bear.
" Blind they are call'd in the world's old report,
" A people greedy, envious, and proud;
" See from their fashions thou thyself art purg'd.
" So great the honour which thy fortune holds, 70
" That either faction makes thee its desire,
" But be it far betwixt the goat and grass!

" Those beasts of Fiesole, let them of themselves
" Make their own litter, and not touch the plant,
" If any yet in their hot bed may spring, 75
" In which again revives the holy seed
" Of those old Romans who remain'd there
" When made of so much wickedness the nest."
" If my demand had met its full response,"
I made him answer, " then thou shouldest not 80
" Yet have been plac'd at human nature's ban ;
" Fix'd in my mind it lives, and in my heart
" The image of thy dear paternal self,
" Who taught me in the world from time to time
" How man to immortality may grow ; 85
" How dear thou art to me, while I may live,
" My tongue shall witness to my grateful thought.
" What of my life thou tellest, that I write,
" And keep for comment with another text,
" Should I meet her unto such knowledge wise. 90
" So much to thee I wish made manifest,
" That no rebuke from conscience I may fear,
" Ready I am, be fortune what it may !
" Such earnest is not novel to mine ears ;
" Let Fortune turn her wheel as it may seem 95
" Best to herself, and the boor whirl his flail !"
My master, on his right cheek turning, look'd
Backward towards me with an earnest gaze,
And said—" He listens well who noteth well."

Yet did I not for this my speech curtail 100
With Ser Brunetto, and I ask'd the names
Of his companions first in fame and mark;
To which he answer'd—"Some 'tis well to know;
"Of others it were better not to speak,
"Time for so great a subject would be scant. 105
"Know thou in short that these were clerics all,
"Mighty in letters, of illustrious fame;
"But in the world with the same vice bemir'd.
"Priscian is one with this most wretched crew,
"And Francis of Accorso;—I could shew 110
"If thou wouldst more of this uncleanness see,
"Him by the servant's servant from the banks
"Of Arno to Bacchiglione sent,
"His foul stretch'd members there in death to leave.
"More I could say, but that I may not walk 115
"Further with thee nor with thee further speak.
"Lo, from the sand I see fresh dust arise!
"Others now come with whom I must not join
"I leave my treasure to thy gentle care,
"In which I still do live, I seek no more." 120
He turn'd away, bearing the look of those
Who o'er the country at Verone scour
For the green mantle, and amidst them all
The winner he and not the looser seems.

CANTO XVI.

Now did I stand where the clear murmur rose
  Of water falling in the other round,
  Like to the humming which the beehives make;
When lo! three ghosts together broke away
  With rapid pace forth from the troop which pass'd 5
  Through the fierce suff'ring of the fiery rain.
They came towards us, and each one exclaim'd—
  "Holt thou, who by the fashion of thy dress
  "To our vile city seemest to belong."
Ah, me! what wounds I saw upon their limbs; 10
  Recent and old, deep trench'd by the flame!
  It grieves me yet as the remembrance comes.
Thoughtful my teacher listen'd to their cries,
  Then turn'd towards me, saying—"Thou must wait—
  "To these our special courtesy is due, 15
"And were it not for this all piercing fire,
  "Born of the nature of the place, methinks
  "Better to thee than them becometh haste."

They re-commenc'd, when we had stopp'd, the chant
  Of their old rhyme, and when to us arriv'd 20
  They whirl'd around in circle, all the three.
As are the oil'd and naked wrestlers wont
  To measure ev'ry grasp and vantage point
  Before they grapple in the earnest strife,
Thus wheeling round each one of these his face 25
  Towards me held, so that his neck was mov'd
  In constant action adverse to his feet.
" And if the misery of this treach'rous place,"
  One said, " and if its aspect, black and charr'd,
  " On us and on our pray'rs bring thy contempt, 30
" Let our renown put in thy heart to say
  " Who thou mey'st be, who with thy living feet
  " Mov'st thus securely through the depths of hell.
" He in the steps of whom thou see'st me tread,
  " All flay'd and naked as his body seems, 35
  " Was of a rank greater than thy belief.
" Grandson of good Gualdrada, and his name
  " Was Guidoguerra, and in life he wrought
  " Much by his wisdom, much, too, by his sword.
" The other who beside me stirs the sand 40
  " Tegghiaio Aldobrandi was, and he
  " Should in the world in pleasant fame be held.
" And I, so plac'd with these in heavy cross,
  " Jacopo Rusticucci was, my wife,
  " By her fierce pride, was my most grievous hurt." 45

If from the fire I could have shelter found,
  Down there amidst them I had cast myself,
  And think my teacher would have given me leave.
But since I must have met the scorching flame,
  Fear overcame me in the longing wish 60
  Which made me crave to meet them in embrace.
Then I began—"No! not contempt, but grief
  "Did your condition stir within my breast,
  "And that so great, long must it give me pain,
"As soon as this my lord unto me spake 65
  "Words by the which my waken'd thought perceiv'd
  "That such as ye are to this region came
"I of your land am one; and ever much
  "Your works and glory of your honour'd names
  "With great affection listen'd to and priz'd. 70
"I leave the gall; the apples sweet I seek,
  "Promis'd to me by him, my leader true;
  "But to the centre must I first descend."
"If long the soul shall o'er thy members rule,"
  This one then answer'd me, "and if thy fame 75
  "Long after thee shall shed its light abroad,
"Tell me if courtesy and valour live
  "Still in our city as they once were wont,
  "Or if they now be utterly cast out?
"Guglielmo Borsiere, who since late 80
  "Our anguish shares; lo, with his troop he goes!
  "Afflicts us greatly with the words he speaks."

" An upstart people, and too sudden gains,
" Pride have engender'd and extravagance
" In thee, oh Florence, to thy present grief!" 75
Such was my cry, with upward lifted face;
The three who this for answer understood
Look'd as men look who face a startling truth.
" If in a time to come, as small thy cost,"
They answer'd all, " others to give content, 80
" Oh, happy thou who speakest at thy will!
" If then these dismal regions thou shalt quit,
" And turn again to see the beauteous stars,
" When it shall be thy joy to say, 'I was,'
" Let the world hear of us in thy discourse." 85
And then they broke their circle and they fled;
Their limbs seem'd wings, so rapid was their flight.
It was not possible to say " Amen"
To match their speed, so quick they disappear'd;
Whereon it seem'd my master's wish to leave. 90
I follow'd him; we little way had gone
When the loud rush of water came so near
We scarce could hear the words that either spake.
Like to that stream which has its proper flow
First from Mount Vesulo, then eastward runs 95
On the left curtain of the Apennines,
Which Acquacheta call'd upon the heights,
Before it rushes to its level bed,
And the same name at Forlì bears no more,

Above San Benedetto thunders lond 100
  And from the Alps leaps downward at a bound,
  Where men by thousands might a shelter find;
So from the steep and shatter'd rock we felt
  With echoing roar the inky waters fall,
  So loud, no ear might listen long unstunn'd. 105
I had a cord around my body bound,
  With which at one time it had been my thought
  To seize the leopard with the painted skin.
When I had this all loosen'd and untied,
  As I was so commanded by my chief, 110
  To him I handed it wrapp'd up and coil'd.
On which towards the right hand turning round,
  And when some little distance from the edge,
  He cast it down into the yawning gulf.
It needs must be some new thing answer gives, 115
  Within myself I said, at this new sign,
  Which thus my master seconds with his eye.
But, ah! how cautious mortals ought to act
  Near those who look not at the deed alone,
  But in their wisdom pierce and know the thoughts! 120
He said to me—"Above shall soon appear
  "That which I wait for, and thy fancy shapes
  "Into some object soon to be beheld.
"Always to truth which hath the form of lie
  "Let, if it can be, lips of man be clos'd; 125
  "Because, though without fault, it maketh shame."

But silence holds not here; and by the notes
  Of this my comedy, reader, I do swear,
  As I do hope thy favour long to keep,
That I beheld through the dark air and gross, 130
  A figure swimming upwards, in a shape
  To make the boldest heart with wonder thrill.
Thus he returns who seeks at times the deep
  To loose the anchor, which entangl'd holds
  Some rock or other hindrance of the sea, 135
And who shoots upward whilst his limbs contract.

CANTO XVII.

" Behold the monster with the piercing tail
  " Who forces mountains, walls and weapons breaks;
  " Lo, this is he who the whole world infects!"
Such were the words my guide to me address'd,
  And then he sign'd to him to touch the shore, 6
  Close at the margin of the stony ways,
And this most loathsome image of deceit
  Approach'd and brought his head and breast to land;
  But on the bank he drew not forth his tail.
His face was as the face of a just man; 10
  Gentle in outer beauty was the skin,
  And of a serpent all the trunk besides.
Two claws were to the armpits rough with hair;
  And all the back and breast and both the sides
  Were painted o'er with circles and with nodes. 15
Richer in colour grounded and relev'd
  Never was cloth of Tartar nor of Turk,
  Nor by Arachne woven such a web!

As frequent barges stand upon the beach,
  Partly in water, partly on the land, 20
  And as among the glutt'nous German boors
The beaver sets himself to make his war;
  So stood this evil and most wicked beast
  Upon the stony brim which checks the sand.
In the blank space his whole tail's length he mov'd, 25
  Turning in upward sweep the ven'mous fork
  With which, as in the scorpion, it was arm'd.
My guide then said—"It needs us now to bend
  "Our course a little round, that we may reach
  "That beast most evil, yonder lying couch'd." 30
So we proceeded by the right hand down,
  And tow'rds th' extremest edge some steps advanc'd,
  Avoiding thus the fire flakes and the sand;
And soon as we approach'd him, then I saw
  Some short way distant and upon the sand 35
  Seated a crowd close to the empty space.
Then spake my master thus—"That unto thee
  "Experience of this circle may be full,
  "Go thou to these and their condition mark.
"Let your discourse and argument be brief; 35
  "Whilst I till thy return this monster speak,
  "That his strong shoulders to our need he yield."
Thus also towards th' extremest verge I went
  Of this, the seventh circle, all alone,
  Where sad and sorrowful the people sate. 45

From out their eyes burst forth their heavy grief;
  With restless hands they strove themselves to save,
  Now from the vapour, now the heated soil.
So fight the dogs in the hot summer time,
  With feet and muzzle madden'd by the bites 50
  Of fleas and flies and other insect plagues.
When on some faces I had fix'd mine eyes,
  Of those on whom rain'd down this grievous fire,
  No one I recognis'd, but I perceiv'd
That from the neck of each suspended hung 55
  A purse with proper sign and colour mark'd,
  And with their eyes they seem'd on these to gloat.
And as I midst them closely looking came,
  I saw a yellow purse on which in blue
  A lion's shape and bearing were design'd. 60
Then looking further in my keen regard
  I saw another, crimson more than blood,
  On which a goose whiter than butter shew'd.
And one, whose purse was white and was impress'd
  With a sow pregnant on an azure field, 65
  Said unto me—"What dost thou in this fosse?
"Hence, hence; begone! and since thou still dost live,
  "Know that my neighbour Vitaliano's place
  "Here on my left hand shall one day be found.
"Midst those of Florence I am Paduan; 70
  "And many times have they my hearing stunn'd,
  "Shouting—Ho, welcome to the sovereign knight!

" Who brings the purse with the three beaks display'd."
And then his mouth he twisted, and his tongue
Thrust out, as oxen which their muzzle lick. 75
And I in fear that longer stay might vex
Him who had warn'd me not to stay too long,
From these sad spirits turn'd aside my steps.
I found my guide already mounted high
Upon the back of the fierce animal, 80
And then he said to me—" Be strong and bold.
" Now we descend by an unwonted stair;
" Mount thou before, I take the midway place,
" So that the tail no injury inflict."
As he to whom the shiv'ring ague fit 85
Approaches near, his nails already white,
Trembling all o'er still lingers in the shade;
So became I at hearing these his words,
But shame was rous'd within me by his threats,
A kind lord's presence makes his servant brave! 90
Upon his shoulders then I took my seat;
I wish'd to say, but utt'rance would not come,
As I had thought—" Hold me in thy embrace."
But he, my help in many times now past
In higher perils, when my seat I gain'd, 95
Clasp'd me and firmly held me in his arms;
And said—" Now Geryon, onward, onward move;
" In circles wide, but gradual thy descent;
" Think of the novel burden which thou bear'st."

As from its place of rest the bark recedes 100
  Backward and backward, so did he back out;
  And when on ev'ry side he felt free play,
There where his breast had been his tail he turn'd,
  And this outstretching, like an eel he mov'd,
  And with his claws he drew to him the air. 105
Greater his fear, methinks, could not have been
  When Phæton in despair threw loose the reins
  By which it seems the heav'ns ev'n yet are scorch'd;
Nor his when wretched Icarus perceiv'd
  His loins unfeather'd by the heated wax, 110
  His sire exclaiming, "Fatal is thy path!"
Than was my fear when, looking round, I saw
  Air on all sides, vanish'd all sight and view,
  Nothing before me but the evil beast.
Onward it swam with motion slow and slow; 115
  Wheeling, descending, not by sense perceiv'd,
  But from the air which fann'd my face and feet.
On the right hand already I could feel
  The roar terrific of th' abyss below;
  Wherefore I downward thrust my head to gaze. 120
And then I grew more fearful as we sank;
  For I saw flames, and groans and wailing heard;
  So that I trembling closer strain'd my thighs.
And then I saw what was before unseen,
  How down and round we sunk by the great griefs 125
  Which now drew near to us on ev'ry side

As when the falcon long on outstretch'd wing,
  Seeing no lure nor quarry in his flight,
  Makes the sad falconer sigh, "Alas! dropp'st thou?"
Slow he descends, whence swift he upward rose 130
  By circles many, and he settles down
  Far from his master, sullen and enrag'd.
Thus Geryon, in the depth of the abyss,
  Displac'd us at the foot of the scarp'd rock;
  And now unloaded of our weight, he sprang 135
Forth like an arrow from the string set free.

CANTO XVIII.

A place in Hell is Malèbolgè call'd,
All stone in structure, iron in its hue,
Like th' encircling cliff which girds it round.
Right in the centre of the plain malign,
There gapes a yawning well, profound and wide, 5
Of which its place the purpose will explain.
The whole remaining circuit forms a sphere,
Between the well and the rock high and hard,
And by ten valleys is the bottom seam'd.
As for protection, where the castle walls 10
Are by successive moats encirel'd round,
These to the spot give certain shape and form;
So in like fashion did those here appear;
And as such forts have from their inner courts,
Small bridges stretching to the outer bank; 15
So from the cliff's low base forward are thrust
Rocks, which across the banks and fosses cut,
Till by the deep well truncated and check'd.

This was the spot where we our footing found,
  Dislodg'd from Geryon's back, and then his way 20
  The poet leftwards took, I after went.
On the right hand new anguish I beheld;
  New torments and new agents to torment,
  Of which the whole first fissure was replete.
Naked the sinners at the bottom mov'd; 25
  This side the middle, facing us they came,
  On that side with us but with quicker steps;
As do the Romans with the mighty crowd,
  The year of Jubilee, they find the means,
  To make the multitude traverse the bridge, 30
So that on one side all their faces bear
  Towards the castle and St Peter's seat,
  Whilst on the other to the mount they turn.
Here, there, and everywhere on the black rock
  Horn'd fiends I saw, who each with mighty whip, 35
  Cruelly and fiercely scourg'd them from behind;
Ah, how their legs they shrinking upward drew,
  As the first lashes fell! and no one dared
  To wait the second strokes, or brave the third.
As I was passing onward; lo! mine eye 40
  Confronted one, and instantly I said,
  "'Tis not the first time this one I have seen."
Hence to recal him fixedly I look'd,
  And my kind leader with me stay'd his steps
  Willing that somewhat backward I might turn, 45

And the scourg'd soul, who thought himself to hide,
  Held down his face, but little it avail'd,
  " Thou, thou !" I said, " with eyes thus cast to earth,
" If thy whole form and bearing be not false,
  " Art Venedico of Caccianimico ! 50
  " But what hath brought thee to this stinging lash ?"
And then he said, " Unwillingly I speak,
  " But thy plain words awaken in me thoughts,
  " Which bring remembrance of the former world.
" I was the man, who Ghisola the fair 55
  " Beguil'd, to yield her to the Marquis' will ;
  " Let foul report give forth what sound it may.
" I am not here the only Bolognese
  " In anguish sunk ; of them so full this place,
  " That not so many tongues this hour have learnt 60
" *Sipa* to say, 'twixt Reno and Savena ;
  " And, if of this thou wishest faith or proof,
  " Call to thy mem'ry our most greedy hearts."
Even as he spake, a demon, with his scourge,
  Struck him, and said, " On, Pander, onward, ho ! 65
  " Here are no women to be bought for gold."
Now once again my escort I rejoin'd,
  And, after a few steps, a place we reach'd,
  Where a rough rock projected from the bank,
Lightly and easily we scaled the height, 70
  And, turning to the right, by the scarp'd ledge,
  These circles of eternity we left.

When we had reach'd the spot, where gapes the rock,
To give a passage to the scourged crew,
My leader said, "Wait thou, that so the face 75
"Of these souls misbegotten on thee strike,
"Of whom thou yet hast not the features seen,
"Although in company with us they went."
From the old bridge's height we watch'd the troop,
Which came towards us from the other side, 80
And by the scourge were in like manner stung
My courteous master, though by me unask'd,
Now said, "Behold that mighty one who comes,
"And in his grief yet seems to shed no tear;
"Lo! what a regal presence still he bears. 85
"This is that Jason, who, both wise and bold,
"Deprived the Colchians of their golden ram,
"That time he through the Isle of Lemnos pass'd,
"When the fierce women, barbarous in their rage,
"Had to the slaughter all their males condemn'd. 90
"With subtle tokens, and with flatt'ring words,
"He there betray'd the young Hypsipyle,
"She who at first the others had deceiv'd;
"And there he left her pregnant and alone—
"Such was the sin which doom'd him to this woe; 95
"And thus Medea too has her revenge.
"Like him, seducers share deserved doom;
"And so sufficient knowledge thou hast gain'd
"Of the first valley, and of those it racks."

Now we were standing where the narrow path 100
  Crosses the second mound, and of it makes
  Support to bear it to the other arch
Here, then, we felt the woful groans of those
  In th' other gorge, sputt'ring with nose and mouth,
  And themselves striking with their open palms. 105
The banks were crusted with a mouldy paste,
  Born of the breath below, and here it stuck,
  Causing to eyes and nostrils rank offence.
So deep the depth, it needed we should mount,
  If we would see the place, upon the arch, 110
  Where to the highest point the rock uprose,
And there we came, and looking thence, we saw
  A crowd below in a dung pool immers'd,
  From human privies seemingly deriv'd.
And whilst I look'd beneath with searching eye, 115
  There I saw one with head so foul with filth,
  Cleric or lay, whether none could say!
He cried to me, "Wherefore so eager thou
  "Me more than th' other filthy ones to scan?"
  I answer'd him, "Because, if mem'ry hold, 120
"Already have I seen thee with dry hair,
  "Alessio Interminei, the Lucchese!
  "Therefore I mark thee more than all the rest."
Then, whilst he struck his head, again he spake,
  "Those flatteries have plung'd me here below, 125
  "Of which my tongue no surfeit ever knew."

Soon after this, my leader spoke, and said,
" A little further thrust thou forth thy face,
" That with its eyes it may the features note
" Of that dishevell'd slattern foul and vile, 130
" Who tears her body with her filthy nails;
" Now lounging low, now on her feet upright.
" That is it is—the harlot who, when ask'd
" Once by her lover, 'Giv'st thou me great thanks?'
" Answer'd him thus, 'Thanks marvellous indeed!'" 135
And now our eyes enough of this had seen

CANTO XIX

Oh, Simon Magus, ye his wretched train,
  Who things of God which to all excellence
  Ought to be wedded, in your evil greed
For gold and silver do adulterate!
  Your time is come, for you the trumpet sounds; 5
  In the third gulf of darkness is your home.
We had already mounted on the edge
  Of the next vault on that part of the rock
  Which o'er the fosse's centre hangeth plumb.
Oh, wisdom infinite! how great the art 10
  Thou shew'st in heav'n, in hell, and on the earth,
  And in thy goodness thine awards how just!
Both in the bottom and the sides I saw
  The livid rock pierc'd everywhere with holes,
  All of one breadth, and each of rounded shape 15
Nor less nor more in amplitude they seem'd
  Than those in my dear San Giovanni's shrine,
  Made for the service of baptizing priests;

And one of which, 'tis since not many years,
  I broke to save one perishing within; 20
  And let this be the seal that none may doubt!
Out of the mouth of each of these were thrust
  A sinner's feet, and to the calf the legs,
  The body all besides within confin'd.
The soles of both the feet were lit with fire, 25
  Tortur'd by which the joints so wildly play'd,
  No band nor twisted rope had borne the strain.
As flame when kindl'd upon unctuous things
  Over the surface only flickering moves,
  So here it restless play'd from heel to point. 30
"Who is he, master, whom the torture fierce
  "More than the others, his companions, racks,
  "And whom, methinks, a redder fire exhausts?"
"Will'st thou," he said, "I bear thee to the bank,
  "Where sinks the slope more gently to the edge; 35
  "Him and his crimes thou from himself shalt know."
Then I—"Thy pleasure is my sweet content;
  "Thou art my lord, and knowest that thy will
  "Is to me law, and what my silence means."
O'er the fourth rampart then we took our way; 40
  Turning aside we went by the left hand
  Down to the bottom, pierc'd throughout and straight,
And my kind master from his thigh's support
  Displac'd me not till we had reach'd the cleft
  Of him whose limbs such agony convuls'd 45

"Whoe'er thou art, thou with reversed form,
"Sad soul! imbedded stakelike in the earth,"
Thus I began, "give answer if thou canst?"
I stood like the confessing priest who shrives
The false assassin, who though he is fix'd
Still calls him back to gain a pause from death.
And loud he cried—"Already there erect?
"Ah, Boniface! erect already there?
"Now by some years I know the writing lies.
"Art thou so soon by that possession cloy'd,
"Which to possess thou fear'dst not to deceive
"The woman fair, then do her outrage foul?"
In act I seem'd to be like those who stand
Not comprehending what an answer means,
And scorn'd and mock'd cannot an answer give.
Then Virgil spake—"Make no delay, but say,
"'I am not he, not he thou think'st I am.'"
And at his bidding so I answer made,
On which convuls'd, the spirit roll'd its feet;
Then, sighing deeply, with a voice of woe,
Said unto me, "What then is thy demand?
"If me to know, so eager thy desire,
"That it hath cause'd thy passage o'er the bank,
"Know then that once I the great mantle wore;
"Of the she-bear I of a truth was son,
"So greedy I to bring my cubs to fame,
"Full pouch above hath pouch'd me here below.

" Dragg'd down beneath my head the others lie,
" Who before me made simony their trade,
" Through and along the rocky fissure stretch'd ; 75
" There too shall I be thrust, when he shall come
" For whom I took thee in my first belief,
" When with such hastiness I made demand.
" Already it is longer since my feet
" Were scorch'd, and since my form was thus revers'd 80
" Than till he planted be with flaming soles ;
" For, after him, a foular still will come
" Out of the west, a pastor without law,
" Fit one to cover well both him and me.
" New Jason he will be, of whom we read 85
" In Machabees ; and as to him was kind
" His king, so shall the French king be to this."
It may be I was too presumptuous here,
When in this fashion I my answer made ;
" Tell me, I pray thee, how much treasure sought 90
" Our Lord, before into St. Peter's hands
" He plac'd the mighty puissance of the keys ?
" ' Follow thou me,' was surely all he ask'd.
" Peter nor th' others from Matthias claim'd
" Silver or gold, when by the lot elect 95
" He took the place the traitor soul had lost.
" For thy deserts thy punishment is just ;
" And guard thou well thet money foully won
" Which against Charles made thy hot anger burn ;

" And were it not that yet it checks my tongue, 100
" The rev'rence due towards the keys supreme,
" Which in thy joyous life thou had'st in hold,
" Words I had us'd of import more severe;
" Because your avarice hath aggriev'd the world,
" The good depressing, raising up the bad. 105
" Pastors as ye are saw th' Evangelist,
" When he saw her, who, on the waters sits,
" Playing the harlot with the kings of earth;
" Her who was born with seven heads, and held
" In the ten horns her proof and evidence, 110
" Long as her virtue gave her spouse delight.
" Of gold and silver ye your gods have made;
" And what is 'twixt th' idolater and you,
" But he to one—ye to a hundred pray.
" Oh, Constantine, of how much ill the source! 115
" Not thy conversion, but that fatal dower
" Which the first Father took from thee in gift!"
Whilst in my strain, such notes as these I sung,
Whether he was by conscience bit or rage,
On both his feet he span convulsive round. 120
I think my guide was pleas'd, for in his face,
He shew'd content, and with attentive ear,
He heard the words which in my truth I spake.
Then he took hold of me with both his arms,
And having clasp'd me upward to his breast, 125
Again remounted by the way we came;

Not weary, as he held me thus embrac'd,
  Till he had borne me to the arch's height,
  Betwixt the fourth and fifth bank forming span.
Here lovingly he laid his burden down, 130
  Gently upon the rock, so scarp'd and bare,
  That the wild goat might scarcely footing find.
From thence another valley met my gaze.

CANTO XX.

Now must my verses tell of torments new,
  And matter to the twentieth canto give
  Of my first chant, which of the damnèd treats.
Already was I all prepar'd to pierce
  With curious eye into th' uncover'd gulf,
  Bath'd in the tears of sorrowful lament;
From the round valley I saw many come,
  Silent and weeping, as on earth we see
  Men chant the litanies in solemn train.
As fell my glance more closely, then it seem'd, 10
  That each one wonderfully, from the chin
  Down to the breast bone, had his form revers'd,
So that his face looked downward o'er his loins;
  They needs must come with movement retrograde,
  For, to look forward, pow'r was wholly gone! 15
Perhaps the force of palsy may in some
  Have caus'd such strange perversion of the form;
  But this I never saw, nor think it could.

If God permit thee, reader, fruit to pluck
  From what thou readest, think now for thyself 20
  How I might keep a dry and tearless cheek,
When near me thus our image I beheld
  Distorted so that the eye's heavy tears
  Roll'd down the back, flooding the loins below.
Surely I wept, leaning upon a ledge 25
  Of the rough rock, so that my escort said,
  " Art thou then weak and foolish like the rest?
" Here lives true piety when pity dies.
  " But who more wicked than the man who yields
  " To sorrow place where judgment is divine! 30
" Lift up thy head, look thou and see for whom
  " The firm earth gap'd before the eyes of Thebes,
  " When all there shouted out—' Where fallest thou?
" ' Oh, Amphiaraus! wherefore flee the war?'
  " And downwards check'd he not his headlong course 35
  " Till seiz'd by Minos, from whom none escape.
" Behold his breast shows where his back should be;
  " Because he sought futurity to pierce,
  " Doom'd to look back, and ever backward move.
" See, too, Tiresias, who his nature chang'd, 40
  " When being male a female form he took,
  " Losing his whole identity of limb;
" And this his doom, that he must once again
  " Strike with the rod the serpents intertwin'd
  " Ere he his virile plumage may resume 45

" Aruns is he with paunch where back should shew,
" Who upon Luni's mountains, at whose base
" The peasant of Carrara dwells and delves,
" Midst the white cliffs of marble made a cave
" His dwelling, whence to watch the starry sphere, 50
" And where the sea was not to vision lost.
" And she who makes a cov'ring to her breasts,
" Not seen by thee, with tresses falling loose,
" And wears on that side her whole veil of hair,
" Was Manto, who made search through many lands 55
" Till there a home she found where I was born;
" Wherefore I pray thee list to me awhile.
" After her father pass'd away from life,
" And Bacchus' city had become enslav'd,
" Long time she wander'd through the upper world. 60
" High in fair Italy there lies a lake
" At the Alps' foot, which closes in Almaine,
" Above Tyrol—Benacus it is nam'd.
" By springs innumber'd is Peninus bath'd,
" 'Twixt Garda and the Val Camonica, 65
" And these within the lake all find their rest.
" Midway there is a spot where he of Trent
" And they of Brescia and Verona's Sees
" May sign the blessing, should they chance to pass.
" Bold and in beauty Peschiera sits, 70
" Holding in check Brescian and Bergamase,
" Where on all sides more lowly sink the banks.

" And here it happens that the flood which finds
" In the lake's bosom no abiding rest,
" Becomes a river by the pastures green. 75
" Soon as th' o'erflowing water finds its head,
" No more Benacus, Mincio it is call'd,
" Till at Governo, where it swells the Po.
" Nor far its course when in a hollow stay'd,
" It wid'ning spreads and so becomes a marsh 80
" In summer oft of deadly peril full!
" Passing that way the ruthless virgin saw
" Land in the middle of the marshy place,
" Uncultur'd, uninhabited, and bare.
" There to avoid all fellowship of man, 85
" She with her slaves and magic art remain'd,
" And liv'd, and there her empty body left.
" Then those who dwelt dispers'd and scatter'd round
" To this place gather'd, for the site was strong,
" The marsh protecting it on ev'ry side. 90
" They built their city over the dead bones;
" And for her sake who chose the place at first,
" Mantua they call'd it, without other choice.
" More dense its inmates at the earlier time,
" Before the folly of Casalodi, 95
" By Pinamonte's treach'ry was deceiv'd.
" And now I warn thee, shouldst thou ever hear
" Another origin to my country giv'n,
" Let not the truth be hidden by a lie."

" Master," I said, " so true thy reas'ning seems, 100
" So sure, and held by me in such clear faith,
" That as spent coals, shall be whet others say.
" But tell me, in that crowd which forward moves,
" Is there not some one worthy of remark,
" For unto this alone my thoughts revert?" 105
And then he said—" That one who from his cheek
" On his dark shoulders backward throws his beard,
" Was, at the time when Greece of males so bare
" Had scarce remaining but the cradl'd babe,
" Augur, and he with Calchas join'd, gave sign 110
" That the first rope at Aulis should be cut.
" His name Eurypylus, of him I sing
" In the high numbers of my tragedy;
" This well thou knowest, for thou know'st it all.
" That other, who so narrow in the flanks, 115
" Was Michael Scott, and truly well he knew
" To play the game of magical deceit.
" Lo! too, Guido Bonatti, Asdente see,
" Who had he to his thread and leather stuck
" Were now in joy,—too late repentance comes! 120
" And those unhappy, who their looms forsook,
" And woman's arts, diviners to become,
" And sorcery work with images and herbs.
" Lo! us begone! already on the edge
" Of both the hemispheres, and on the wave 125
" Beyond Seville, Cain and his thorns repose.

" And yesternight the moon shone full and round,
" And thou rememb'rest well, nor let nor doubt
" Gave to thee fear in the thick forests gloom."
Whilst yet he spake we onwards took our way. 130

CANTO XXI.

From bridge to bridge, speaking of other things
  Than what my comedy now cares to sing,
  Thus did we onward speed, and at the crest
We pass'd the other fissure to behold
  Of Malèbolgè, and its vain laments; 5
  And, lo! in darkness marvellous it lay
As the Venetians in their arsenals
  Boil in the winter the tenacious pitch
  To caulk the batter'd ships, no longer sound
To face the dang'rous deep, and at this time 10
  One a new ship constructs, one stops the ribs
  Which many voyages have caus'd to gape;
One strikes the prow, one hammers on the poop;
  Some fashion oars, and others cables twist;
  Some mend the mizen sail, and some the main; 15
So not by fire, but by the Art divine,
  Simmer'd below the thick and heavy pitch,
  Daubing on ev'ry side the sloping bank.

I look'd, but in it nothing saw save this,
  Bubbles up—heaving from the boiling mass, 20
  Now swelling high, and now subsiding flat.
Whilst downward in my earnest thought I gaz'd,
  My leader said to me, "Beware, beware!"
  Dragging me tow'rds him from my standing place,
I turn'd me like the man, who, longing seeks 25
  To look on that from which he needs must fly,
  And whom his fear so suddenly assails,
The wish to see checks not the instant flight,
  And a black devil, lo, I saw behind
  Running towards me o'er the rugged bridge. 30
Ah! what a look he bore of cruel hate,
  And in his action and his gait how fierce;
  With wings extended, and with light'ning feet!
His shoulder proudly lifted up and sharp,
  The burden of a sinner's haunches bore, 35
  Whom by the tendons of his feet he held;
"Ho, Malèbranchè, of our bridge," he cried,
  "Of Santa Zita's elders lo ye one!
  "Down, thrust him down, that I again return
"Unto that earth where they so thickly swarm; 40
  "Except Bontaro, swindlers all, and cheats.
  "A 'no' for gold there soon becomes a 'yes.'"
He flung him down, then by the flinty rock
  He turn'd, more swiftly than the mastiff loos'd,
  The flying thief to follow, ever sped 45

The wretch div'd under, and then up he roll'd;
  But the foul fiends beneath the cov'ring arch
  Shouted, "No Santo Volto saveth here!
"Man swim not here as in the Serchio's stream;
  "If thou would'st therefore from our hooks escape,
  "Rise not too much above the pitchy lake."
And then they seiz'd him with a hundred hooks,
  Crying—"Here cover'd thou may'st play thy dance,
  "And, if thou canst, still secretly purloin."
So in like manner cooks their scullions teach
  To plunge with forks beneath the caldron's flood
  The flesh which on the surface may not swim.
Then my kind master said—"That thou escape
  "All notice here, crouch down behind some rock
  "That to thy person danger may not reach;
"And should offence to me be said or done,
  "Have thou no fear, for this is no new thing;
  "'Tis not the first time I have known such strife."
Then he pass'd down beyond the bridge's crest,
  And when he reach'd the edge of the sixth bank,
  Great need he had of an assured front.
With the fierce fury and the stormy speed
  Of dogs which rush to seize the unhappy wretch
  Who, where he stops, craves suddenly for alms,
From underneath the bridge they issued forth,
  And all their weapons fiercely on him turn'd;
  But with a cry he spake—"Be not unjust!

" Before your threat'ning hook may dare my flesh,
" Let one of you step out and hearing give,
" And then take counsel how my flesh to tear." 75
All shouted out—" Go, Malacoda, go!"
So one mov'd forward whilst the rest stood still,
And coming, said—" What will this profit him?"
" Ah, Malacoda! thinkest thou to see
" Me hither come," my master answer made, 80
" From all your arts and artifice secure,
" Without the will divine and prosp'rous fate?
" Let, let me pass; for it in heav'n is will'd
" I to another shew this savage way."
Then did his arrogance so quick subside 85
That he let fall his weapon at his feet,
And to the others spake—" We may not strike!"
And my guide said to me—" Oh, thou who sitt'st
" So still among the rude rocks of the bridge
" To me securely now thou may'st return." 90
Then I bestirr'd myself, and swiftly went;
And all the demons rush'd with forward plunge,
So that I fear'd they would not compact hold.
Thus have I seen the troops in panic fear
Who, issuing from Caprona upon terms, 95
Found on all sides a fierce and swarming foe.
In contact close my person new I drew
Near to my guide, withdrawing not my gaze
From their aspect, which boded evil things.

Low'ring their hooks—"Will'st thou I hit him, ho! 100
"Right on the flank," one to the other said;
And they all answer'd, "Ho, ho! notch him well!"
But he, that demon who had held in speech
My leader, turn'd him quickly to the rest,
And said—"Peace, ho! Scarmiglione; peace!" 105
Then said to us—"Further by this rough rock
"All passage now is barr'd, for the sixth arch
"At its foundation crush'd and broken lies.
"And if a further progress be your wish,
"By this steep place 'tis needful you should go; 110
"Another rock is near which footing yields.
"Five hours beyond this hour, the day last past,
"One thousand years two hundred sixty two
"Have roll'd away since this to ruin came.
"I now send forth some of my troop to see 115
"If any one may thence on exit find;
"Go with them, fear not evil at their hands.
"Onwards, then, Alichino, Calcabrina,"
Thus he began, "Cagnazzo, onward thou,
"Be Barbariccio leader of the ten, 120
"On Libicocco, Draghignazzo on,
"Thou tusky Ciriatto, Graffiacan,
"And Farfarell, and Rubicante mad.
"Search ye around and through the boiling paste,
"See that these safely reach the other ridge 125
"Which o'er the hollow forms an arch entire."

" Ah, me !" I said, " Master what do I see ?
" Without an escort let us go alone,
If the way known to thee, no aid I seek.
" If thou be wise as thou hast ever been, 130
" Ah, seest thou not the grinning of their teeth,
" And all the fearful threat'ning of their looks ?"
And then he said—" I will not thou should'st fear ;
" Leave them to grin and gnash at their good will,
" 'Tis for these seething wretches this they do. 135
They, turning, mov'd away by the left bank ;
But first, each one of them his tongue held tight
Between his teeth, a signal to his chief ;
Whilst he behind sounded his trump obscene.

CANTO XXII.

I have seen cavaliers move out of camp
  Begin the combat and the muster make,
  And sometimes for their safety scour the plain;
I have seen pillagers lay waste your land;
  Oh, Aretines! I have seen troopers wheel, 5
  Strike in the tourney, struggle in the jousts,
Sometimes with trumpet, and at times with bells,
  With drums and signallings from castle tow'rs,
  With our own things, with strange and foreign things;
But never at a trump so strange have seen 10
  Horsemen and infantry their movements make,
  Nor ship at signal of the earth or stars.
With the ten demons then we onward went;
  Ah, dread companions! but 'tis in the church
  With saints, and in the tavern with the sot! 15
Still on the pitchy mass my thought was fix'd,
  To mark the whole condition of the cleft,
  And the lost wretches who were burning there.

Like dolphins when they give with archèd back
  To watchful mariners the warning sign, 20
  Who measures take how they may save their ship,
So at short intervals, to ease their pain,
  One of these sinners would his back expose,
  But quick as lightning hide himself again.
And as upon the ditch's watery edge 25
  The frogs squat under with their muzzles out,
  Their feet concealing and their body's hulk,
So on all sides the sinners crouch'd around;
  But as towards them Barbariccio came,
  Below the bubbling pitch again they sunk. 30
I saw, and even yet fear chills my heart,
  One awhile linger, as it happens oft
  One frog remains whilst the rest scamp'ring fly;
And Graffiacan, who nearest to him stood,
  High hook'd him by the pitch bedaubèd hair, 35
  And drew him out like otter from the stream.
Well did I know of ev'ry fiend the name,
  For when elected I had noted all,
  And when they nam'd each other, heedful been.
"Ho, Rubecantè! fix upon his back, 40
  "And with thy talons flay from him his skin."
  So shouted out the whole accursèd crew.
"Ah, master mine," I said, "tell if thou canst
  "Who may he be, this most unhappy soul,
  "Thus fall'n into his foe's relentless grasp" 45

My leader then towards him drawing near,
  Ask'd whence he came; to whom he answer gave—
  "I in the kingdom of Navarre was born;
"A Signor there my mother made me serve,
  "She who had borne me to a ribald knave, 50
  "Waster of his possessions and himself.
"Then in the train of Tibald, the good king,
  "Traffic I made of dignity and place,
  "For which I make amends in this fierce heat."
And Ciriatto, from whose mouth protrudes 55
  On either side a tusk like tusk of boar,
  Made him to feel how one of them could tear,
Midst evil cats the mouse had fall'n a prey!
  But Barbariccio clasp'd him in his arms,
  And said—"Whilst I thus hold him, keep ye still." 60
And then towards my master turning face,
  Said—"Ask, if still thou wishest more to know,
  "Ere by the others piecemeal he be torn."
Then spake my guide—"Amidst those guilty souls
  "Know'st thou if any be of Latin land 65
  "Beneath the pitch?" "One late I left," he said,
"Who from the land thou meanest liv'd not far;
  "Would I were with him under cover still,
  "Then should I fear no hook, and dread no claw?"
And Libicocco—"We have borne too much!" 70
  Then with his hook he seiz'd him by the arm,
  And with fierce rent a sinew bore away.

And Draghignazzo fain had grip'd the wretch
  Under the legs, at which, with dang'rous look,
  The hot Decurion wheel'd him round and round. 75
When from their rage a little they had cool'd,
  Of him who still stood gazing at his wound,
  My leader with all haste thus made demand —
" How nam'st thou him from whom in evil hour
  " Thou hast departed for this wretched shore." 80
  " To which he answer'd—" Fra Gomita, he,
" Known at Gallura—sink of ev'ry fraud—
  " Who held his master's foes in such good hand,
  " And so contriv'd that each one gave him praise.
" He took their gold and softly let them go— 85
  " 'Tis his own boast, and in his other trusts
  " No small deceiver he, but prince of cheats.
" With him does Donno Michael Zanche hold
  " Of Logodoro, and they wag their tongues,
  " Sardinia's matters their unwearying text. 90
" Ah, me! see how the other snarling grins;
  " More I could tell, but much I fear that he
  " Is now prep'r'd my skin to claw and flay."
The captain high to Farfarello turn'd,
  Whose eyes were rolling in his act to strike, 95
  And said—" Behind, behind, thou bird of hell!"
" If you desire to see or wish to hear,"
  Then recommenced the terror-stricken wretch,
  " Tuscan or Lombard, I will make them come.

"But let the Malèbranchè stand aloof,
"That from their vengeance we may nothing fear;
"And I when seated on this very spot,
"For one that I am will make seven appear,
"When I shall whistle, as our wont to do
"To make one shew himself above the pitch." 105
On hearing this his mouth Cagnazzo rus'd,
Rolling his head, and said—"Ho! ho! his craft
"A trick has forg'd that he may plunge beneath."
Then he who knew full well to set the springe,
Made answer—"Is it then a craft so great 110
"More pain and sorrow for mine own to make?"
No longer Alechin refrain'd, but said,
From the rest diff'ring—"If thou goest down
"I will not follow thee with speed of foot,
"But with my wings will flutter o'er the pitch; 115
"Leave, leave the summit, be the bank your screen,
"See, now, if thou alone count'st more than we."
Oh, thou who readest, mark this novel sport:
The eyes of each to th' other side were turn'd,
He who resisted most the first to look. 120
Well had he chos'n his time; the Navarrese,
His foot he planted firm, and quick as light
He leapt, and from their purpose he was free.
Then instantly was each one fill'd with rage,
He most of all, the cause of the default, 125
So he mov'd forward, shouting—"Thou art caught."

Nought it avail'd him, for give rein to fear
  And wings than lose their pow'r; the one went down,
  The other, flying, upward bore his breast.
'Tis thus the wild duck, instantly it sees 130
  The falcon swooping tow'rds it, dives below,
  Whilst he soars upward passionate and fierce.
Then Calcabrina, furious at the trick,
  Flying, pursues him, and yet well content
  He should escape, to make a quarrel sure. 135
And as the keen deceiver pass'd from view,
  On his companion quick he turn'd his claws,
  And o'er the ditch with him in struggle went.
But a true bird of prey the other prov'd;
  Well did he use his talons; and they both 140
  Plung'd in the middle of the boiling lake.
Soon did the heat unloose the fierce dispute;
  But to rise upward all their efforts fail'd,
  So clogg'd their pinions in the seething pitch.
And Barbariccio, troubl'd like the rest, 145
  Made four take flight towards the other bank
  With all their drags; and these with rapid wing
Alighting here and there as suited each,
  Stretch'd out their hooks towards th' entangl'd foes,
  Who were by this time scalded in the filth 150
And so we left them in their troubles plung'd.

CANTO XXIII

Without companions, silent and alone,
  Onward we went, one first and one behind,
  As walk the Minor Frati, bent in thought.
To Æsop's fable mem'ry travell'd back
  As I contemplated the present strife, 5
  Where of the frog and mouse he weaves his tale;
For "now" and "just now" bear not closer sense
  Than these two bear, if so we couple well,
  End and beginning in a thinking mind;
And as one thought forth from the other springs, 10
  So of this one another one was born,
  Which of my first fear made a double fear.
And this my thought, those who by acts of ours
  Have met with ridicule, with jeer and hurt,
  In sooth it seemeth, must sore vexèd be. 15
If anger be with evil will conjoin'd,
  These then will follow with more cruel rage
  Than ever savage hound the hunted hare.

I felt my hair already arch'd with fear,
As on the sounds behind intent, I stood
So I said, "Master! if thou canst not hide
"Quickly thyself and me, much do I dread
"The Malèbranchè, after us they come;
"It seems to me I feel them even now."
He said, "Had I of silver'd glass been made,
"Thy outward image had not been impress'd
"Sooner than I thy inner mind discern.
"For now thy thoughts with mine so intertwine
"With act alike, in outward guise alike,
"That of us both one counsel the result.
"If it should chance the right bank so incline
"That to the other cleft we can descend,
"The chace imagin'd we may still avoid."
Scarce had these words of counsel left his lips,
When with extended wing I saw them come,
Already near, with eager wish to seize.
My leader instant clasp'd me in his arms.
As at the tumult when the mother wakes,
And sees the kindling flame around and near,
She clasps her child and flies and makes no halt,
Him not herself holding in care so sweet,
She seeks no robe save what she singly wears;
Down from the summit of the flinty cliff,
Supine he slid by the quick sloping rock,
Which form'd one boundary of the other cleft.

Never did water through its conduit rush
With swifter flow to turn the land-mill wheel,
As on the blades its force impinging plays,
Than did my master on this rocky edge,
Bearing me closely upward to his breast, 50
Not as if his companion, but his child.
Scarce had he footing found upon the bed
Of the deep gulf, when on the height above
They came; but danger now from them was past;
For that high Providence which, in His will, 55
Of the fifth trench made them to be the lords,
Denied to all the pow'r to quit the same.
Down there we found a troop in painted guise,
Who mov'd around with slow and weary steps,
Weeping with look dispirited and worn. 60
Monk's gowns they wore, with hoods, which lowly fell
Over their eyes, and in the fashion cut
Of those Cologna's monks are wont to wear.
Without, all gilded, dazzling to the view,
Within, all lead, and of such grievous weight, 65
Weigh'd against them Fred'rick's seem'd made of straw.
Ah, robe! oppressive to eternity!
Once more towards the left hand side we turn'd
Along with them, on their sad grief intent;
But, by the weight oppress'd, this weary band 70
So slowly came, we had companions now,
At each new forward movement of the limb

So to my guide I said, "Find now some soul
"Of whom by act or name thou knowledge hast;
"And as we onwards pass look thou around." 75
And one who understood the Tuscan tongue,
Behind me shouted out, "Hold, hold your steps!
"Ye who so hurry through the tawny air;
"Perchance from me thou may'st thy wish obtain."
Whereon my guide turn'd round, exclaiming, "Wait" 80
"And then with pace like his do thou proceed."
I waited, and saw two whose looks express'd
An eager longing to be join'd with me;
But by the weight and the strait way detain'd.
When they came near, with sour and envious eye, 85
Awhile they eyed us, but no word they spake;
Then, wheeling round, each to the other said,
"He seems by act of breath to be alive,
"And if not dead, what privilege be theirs
"To move unburden'd by this leaden robe?" 90
And then he said, "Oh, Tuscan, who art come
"Into the college of sad hypocrites,
"Say who thou art, and hold us not in scorn?"
I answer'd them "Born and to manhood rear'd
"In the great city of fair Arno's stream, 95
"I wear the body I have ever worn.
"But you, who are you, down whose cheeks I see
"Distil such heavy and surpassing woe?
"How great that grief which thus so mighty shows!"

And then one answer made, " These orange cowls 100
" So heavy are with lead that, like the weights
" Which sway the balances, they sway and creak.
" We joyous brothers were and Bolognese,
" I Catalano, Loderingo he,
" And by thy native town elected both, 105
" As had been custom there one man to choose
" As peace preserver, and how noted we,
" About Gardingo, to this hour is told."
Then I began, " Friars, your evil case . . . . . ."
But spoke no more, for on my vision fell 110
One on a three arm'd cross laid flat on earth.
When he beheld me, he was all convuls'd,
His heavy sighs making his beard to stir.
And the Fra Catalan, who this perceiv'd,
Said, " Lo ! this pierced one, whom thou behold'st, 115
" Counsell'd the Pharisees that it was meet
" One man should suffer for the people's weal,
" Naked, and thus athwart the open way
" As now thou seest, he is fated here,
" Ere each one passes, first his weight to feel ; 120
" And in like suff'ring, lies his consort's sire
" Within this gulf, and of the council all,
" Who for the Jews an evil seed did sow."
Then I saw Virgil, with great wonder struck,
Beholding him, who, stretch'd upon the cross, 125
In this vile fashion met eternal doom.

Thereafter thus he to the Fratè spake;
" Be not displeas'd, and, if permitted, say,
" If there may be an outlet on the right
" By which we two a passage out shall find 130
" Without constraint of these black angel fiends,
" Who from this depth to guide us forth are come."
To this he answered, " Better than thy hope,
" A rock is near, which, from the circuit vast,
" Crops out and crosses all the savage vales, 135
" Save that here broken, archway none it makes;
" By the rock's ruin you may upwards mount,
" Which sloping lies, and in the bottom heap'd."
With head inclin'd, awhile my master stood,
Then said, " Our need of small account he made, 140
" Who there impales the sinner on his hook."
The Fratè, " At Bologna it is said,
" The devil hath many sins, among them this,
" He is a liar and the prince of lies"
Then onward with great strides and in his look 145
Disturb'd and somewhat angry, stalk'd the chief.
So from the leaden-burden'd I retir'd
The steps to follow of the feet belov'd.

CANTO XXIV.

In the young year, that season when the Sun
  Under Aquarius warms his gelid locks,
  And when the night divides the hours with day;
When the hoar frost upon the earth recalls
  The image of its sister fair and white, 5
  But in its feath'ry softness fleeteth fast;
The peasant churl whose store of fodder fails,
  Rises from bed, and looks and sees the plain
  One white expanse, and anxious slaps his thigh;
Home he returns, and restless moves and moans, 10
  Like some poor wretch uncertain how to act;
  Then looks again and so recovers hope,
Beholding the whole face of nature chang'd
  In the short interval, his switch he grasps
  And forth his lambs to the fresh pasture drives; 15
So did my spirits sink as I beheld
  My master's brow thus clouded and disturb'd,
  But to the hurt the plaster quickly came;

For as our feet approach'd the ruin'd bridge,
  My leader turn'd to me with the sweet look 20
  Which first I saw when at the mountain's foot.
His arms he open'd, after some short thought
  Within himself, and observation keen
  Of the wild ruin; and he held me clasp'd,
And like to him who works and taketh note, 25
  And ever what affects him still foresees;
  So whilst he rais'd me upward to the crest
Of one rough block, another mass he scann'd,
  Saying; "By that one grapple thou and climb,
  "But first take heed that it will bear thee safe." 30
This was no path for one with hooded gown;
  For scarcely we—he Spirit, I with help—
  Could, seizing every vantage, scale the height
And were it not that from this valley's depth
  More than the other the ascent was short, 35
  He had been safe, perhaps; I vanquish'd quite.
But since the Malèbolgè tow'rds the mouth
  Of the deep well in ev'ry part inclines,
  Each valley is in structure so arrang'd,
That one bank rises as the other sinks, 40
  At length we reach'd the very point above,
  Where from the rugged cliff the last stone breaks.
So faint and so exhausted came my breath,
  When once above, further I could not go,
  So myself seated as the height I gain'd, 45

" Now it befits thee to shake off this sloth,"
The Master said, " for resting upon down,
" And under quilts is not the way to fame ;
" And without this he who his life consumes,
" Leaves of himself on earth no better trace, 50
" Than smoke in air or on the water foam ;
" Up, up, then, up ! conquer thy suff'ring breath,
" That courage rouse which ev'ry battle wins,
" If not kept down by the too-heavy flesh.
" Longer the stair which we have yet to climb, 55
" Escape from these our foes is not enough ;
" If thou my meaning takest, up and do !"
Thereon I rose and made an outward show
Of breathing easier than I felt I could,
And said, " Go onwards—I am strong and bold." 60
So upward by the cliff our way we took ;
Rugged it was, confin'd and difficult,
More steep than was the former one we clomb.
To cloak my faintness as I walk'd I spake,
On which a voice came from the other trench, 65
With words confus'd and utt'rance indistinct.
I knew not what it said, though now I stood
Upon the arch's crest which spann'd the place ;
But he who spake appear'd by anger mov'd.
My gaze was fix'd below, but the quick eye 70
Possess'd no power to pierce the darkness dense,
Wherefore I said, " Master, I pray thee take

" The other circle, and descend the bridge,
  " For what I hear, for me no meaning hath,
  " And what I see, I cannot bring to shape." 75
" No other answer give I thee," he said,
  " But the act only; for an honest quest
  " Ought to be followed by the silent deed."
Downward we took our way from the bridge head,
  To where it junction forms with the eighth bank, 80
  And then the whole cleft open'd to my view;
And lo! within I saw a fearful mass
  Of serpents, of such strange and diverse kinds,
  That the remembrance chills my very blood.
Let Lybia's sands no more their thousands vaunt; 85
  For if Chelydri, Pharees, Jaculi,
  Cenchri, and Amphisbænas there find life,
So many evil plagues and loathsome things
  They ne'er produc'd, nor all the Ethiop land,
  Nor that which stretches by the Red Sea shore. 90
Amidst this cruel and malignant heap
  Ran wretches naked and with terror struck,
  No place to hide! no heliotrope to save!
Their hands behind by serpents were entwin'd;
  These on the back and loins fix'd head and tail 95
  And then in front were twisted into knots.
And lo! on one who to our bank drew near,
  A serpent darted, and the wretch transfix'd
  Where with the neck the shoulders junction make.

Never was written O nor I so quick, 100
As he caught fire, was burnt, and then became
A show'r of ashes scatter'd o'er the ground.
And when to ashes and to dust reduc'd,
Ash to its ash re-gather'd, and at once
As by self-action the same form resum'd. 105
By sages great thus we are told and taught,
That when the Phœnix dies, again he lives,
When the five hundredth year comes rolling round.
No herb nor grassy blade his life supports,
But only tears of frankincense and spice; 110
And his death shroud is spikenard and the myrrh.
And like to him who falls and knows not how,
Whether by force of demon dragg'd to earth,
Or by some stoppage of the vital flow,
When he can raise himself he looks around, 115
All stunn'd and lost in the great agony
Of his late suff'ring, and in gazing sighs;
So look'd this sinner after he uprose.
Oh, God's great justice! how severe art Thou
Who with such blows Thy mighty vengeance pours! 120
My guide demanded who he was and whence;
He answer'd thus: "From Tuscany I fell
"Short time ago into this cruel gorge.
"A beast's life, not a man's, was my delight,
"Bastard I was, and Vanni Fucci am, 125
"A beast! Pistoia was my fitting den."

" Oh, Chief," I said; " tell him he must not stir,
" And ask what crime hath thrust him here below,
" Whom once I knew a man of blood and rage."
The sinner understood, and made no feint, 130
But soul in face he right tow'rds me turn'd,
His whole expression one of guilty shame.
And said, " 'Tis greater grief to me that thou
" Hast thus surpris'd me in my misery,
" Than e'en when ravish'd from my other life. 135
" That which thou askest I may not deny;
" Here I am plac'd because I was the thief
" Who stole the treasures of the sacristy;
" And to another this was falsely charg'd.
" But that thou mayst not at such sight rejoice, 140
" If ever thou should'st quit this dark abode,
" Ope thine ears and my prediction hear;
" First shall Pistoia mourn the Neri lost,
" Her laws and people Florence then renew.
" From Val-di-Magra Mars a vapour draw, 145
" Which by obscure and troubled clouds involv'd,
" Shall with a storm impetuous and fierce
" Be brought to combat on Piceno's plains;
" And then so suddenly the cloud disperse,
" That each Bianco shall confess his wound 150
" I tell thee this, for it will give thee pain."

CANTO XXV

He spoke, and when he ended then the thief
  His hands uplifted, and with sign obscene,
  Exclaim'd—"Thus I defy thee, oh, thou God!"
Henceforth as friends I held that serpent brood,
  For one of them coil'd instant round his neck, 5
  As if he would have said—"Speak thou no more!"
Another seiz'd his arms and bound him tight
  So as with rivets, coiling him in front
  That he could not the slightest gesture make.
Pistoia! ah, Pistoia! why not doom 10
  Thyself to ashes, and existence close,
  Since deeper than thy ancestors in crime?
Through all the circles dark and drear of hell
  I saw no spirit against God so proud,
  Not he who fell before the walls of Thebes. 15
He fled, nor further utt'rance gave nor word;
  And, lo! I saw a centaur full of rage
  Come shouting—"Where, where be this harden'd soul!"

Not in Maremma swarm the serpent brood
  Methinks, as on his back they countless swarm'd, 20
  From haunch to where the human form begins.
Above the shoulders, right behind the nape,
  With wings extended wide, a dragon crouch'd,
  With fire involving whomsoe'er he meets.
My master said—"Cacus thou seest there, 25
  "Who at the rock base of Mount Aventine
  "Full many times hath made a crimson lake
"He and his brethren tread not the same road,
  "For he by cunning gain'd his thievish ends
  "Upon th' abounding herds which pastur'd near; 30
"Therefore his wicked deeds were made to cease
  "Under the club of Hercules, who, perhaps,
  "Gave him a hundred blows, feeling but ten."
Whilst he thus spake, and past the other flew,
  Low down beneath us spirits three advanc'd, 35
  And their approach myself nor guide perceiv'd,
Until we heard them shouting—"Who be ye?"
  On this from our discourse we instant stay'd,
  And fix'd on them alone our earnest eyes.
They were unknown to me; but one it chanc'd, 40
  As it may chance to happen any time,
  Occasion found the other one to name,
Saying—"Cianfa, where may he be hid?"
  On which, my guide's attention to insure,
  I placed my finger on my chin and lip. 45

If, reader, thou art backward to believe
  What I shall say, no wonder thou shouldst doubt,
  For I myself who saw can scarce believe.
As fix'd on them I held my curious gaze,
  A serpent with six feet, like arrow darts, 50
  Full front on one, clinging to ev'ry part.
With his mid feet his belly he entwin'd,
  With his fore feet he tightly clasp'd his arms;
  Then with his teeth he seiz'd on either cheek.
With the hind feet he stretch'd around the thighs, 55
  And thrust between the legs his scaly tail,
  And by the loins behind he held it curl'd.
Never did ivy cling with rooted hold
  To its own tree, as did this fearful beast
  With th' other's members intertwine its own. 60
And thus they held as if of melted wax
  They once had been, and then their colour mix'd;
  What each once was, to be now neither seem'd.
'Tis thus we find before the flame breaks forth,
  That paper takes a brown uncertain tint, 65
  Not black as yet, although no longer white.
The other two beheld him, and from each
  Came forth the cry—"Agnel, alas! how chang'd!
  "Lo! neither two nor one thou seemest now."
Already had the two heads one become, 70
  When we beheld as 'twere two forms commix'd
  In but one face, wherein the twn were lost.

The arms which once were four now formed but two;
  The thighs, the legs, the belly, and the chest
  Had become members such as none had seen. 75
All primitive aspèct was lost and gone;
  Two and yet no one the transfigur'd form
  Appear'd, and with slow passage mov'd away.
As doth the lizard, under the fierce heat
  Of Sirius, shifting place from hedge to hedge, 80
  Dart o'er the burning way with lightning speed,
So tow'rds the paunches of the other two
  A serpent seem'd to come, raging as fire;
  Livid it was and black like pepper corn.
And at that part where first its aliment 85
  Our nature takes, one of the two it pierc'd;
  Then at full length before him stretchèd fell.
He that was pierc'd look'd on, yet spake no word;
  But rather with his feet close set he yawn'd,
  Like one o'erwhelm'd with sleep or fever trance. 90
He eyed the serpent, and the serpent him;
  From this one's wound, from that one's mouth there came
  Smoke heavy, and the smokes commingling met.
Be Lucan silent where his verses sing
  Of sad Sabellus' and Nasidius' woes, 95
  And let him hear what now my lips proclaim!
On Cadmus and on Arethusa, too,
  Be Ovid silent! but not envious I;
  Though her a fountain, him he makes a snake;

For never were two natures front to front 100
  Transmuted thus, so that the forms of both
  Were for an interchange of matter ripe.
They to each other answer'd by such laws,
  That whilst the serpent fork-like split his tail,
  The wounded ghost his feet together bound, 105
Leg to its leg, and thigh to thigh adher'd
  In such close junction, that the junction ceas'd
  To offer mark by which it might be seen.
The tail thus cleft that form and figure took
  The other lost; and whilst of one the skin 110
  Had become soft, the other's now was hard.
I saw the arms into the armpits shrink,
  And the two feet, which in the beast were short,
  Drew length'ning out, as the ghost's shorter grew.
And then, together twisted, the hind feet 115
  Became the member held of man concealed,
  And the wretch his into two members stretch'd
Whilst the thick smoke one and the other veils
  With a new colour, and on one the hair
  Bringeth to grow, and makes the other smooth, 120
The one rose up and down the other fell,
  Yet turning not away their evil eyes,
  Under the glare of which each face was chang'd.
He who was up his tow'rds the temples drew;
  And of the sur abounding matter there 125
  Two ears forth issued from the scarce form'd cheeks.

What was not yet withdrawn, and in excess,
From that the nose upon the face was form'd;
And the lips thicken'd as in life we find.
He who was prostrate forward thrusts his face, 130
And in the head the ears retiring draws,
As draws the snail the horns within its shell;
The tongue, which once was single and for speech,
Splits to a double tongue, the other's fork
Shrinks, closes up, and then the smoke is stay'd. 135
The soul, a bestial nature now become,
Flies through the valley with a hissing sound,
The other sputt'ring fury comes behind.
Then his new shoulders towards the other bent;
He said to him—"'Tis good Buoso now 140
"Should run this crawling race as I have done!"
Thus of the seventh foul refuse I beheld
The change and interchange; and my excuse
Is in the novelty, if tongue transgress.
And though of very truth mine eyes were touch'd 145
With some confusion, and my mind depress'd,
Howe'er conceal'd these could not so escape,
That I might not Puccio Sciancato note;
And of his three companions who first came
He of the three alone suffer'd no change, 150
The other thou Gaville mournest still.

CANTO XXVI.

Rejoice, thou Florence, since thou art so great,
  Flutt'ring thy wings over both sea and land,
  And ev'n in hell itself wide thy renown.
Amidst the thievish rout five such I found
  Of thy high citizens, that it brings me shame, 5
  And adds no mighty honour unto thee.
But if, as morning comes, dreams speak the truth,
  Soon shalt thou feel not what the others may,
  But what for thee ev'n Prato keenly longs.
And should it be already, not too soon! 10
  Nay let it be, if it be rul'd by fate!
  More will it grieve me as I older grow.
We left the spot, and upward by the steps
  Made by the jutting stones we first had climb'd,
  My guide remounted, and me after drew. 15
And labouring onward by this lonely way,
  Through splinters and rough fragments of the rock,
  The foot without the hand no progress made.

Then I had grief, and still my grief returns
  When mem'ry now recalls what I beheld; 20
  And o'er my genius more I place the curb,
That it may run not unless virtue lead;
  So that if happy star or holier thing
  Grant me the good, my own fault lose it not.
When on the grassy hill the rustic lies 25
  What season he who fills the world with light,
  Least from us hides the glory of his face,
That hour when to the gnat the fly gives place;
  Thick as he sees the fire-flies in the vale,
  Where grows his vine perchance, and works his plough; 30
So were the flames which the eighth fissure lit
  With light resplendent, by mine eyes perceiv'd
  Soon as I stood where rose its depths to view.
And ev'n as he who call'd th' avenging bears,
  And saw Elijah's chariot part from earth, 35
  When straight to heav'n the horses wing'd their flight;
Soon with his foll'wing eye lost outward shape,
  And nothing saw saving the flame alone,
  Which like a little vapour floated up:
So in the trench's gorge each flame did glide, 40
  And though its prey offer'd no outward sign,
  Each flame a sinner held involv'd within.
Upright I stood upon the bridge to see,
  Yet so that, without hold of the rough rock,
  No need of force to make my fall more sure. 45

My guide, who mark'd my keen desire to know,
Then said—"Within these flames are spirits held;
"And his own flame to each one clothing makes."
"Ah, master mine!" I answer'd him, "thy words
"Remove all doubt, but it had been my thought 50
"That it was thus, so of thee wish'd to ask;
"That fire which at the flame's point so divides,
"Who is therein? it rises like the fire,
"Where Eteocles with his brother lay"
He answer'd me—"Therein in torment burn 55
"Diomed and Ulysses, and the two
"In divine vengeance join as once in rage;
"And from within their flame with groans they mourn
"The ambush of the horse, which was the gate
"Whence issued forth the noble seed of Rome. 60
"There, too, they mourn the art through which the dead
"Deidamia still Achilles mourns,
"And rue in suff'ring the Palladium's theft."
"If there may live within these fires the pow'r
"Of speech," I said, "master, I earnest pray, 65
"And in my pray'r may pray'rs a thousand speak!
"That thou wilt not my tarrying here deny
"Until shall hither come the horned flame;
"See with what longing I towards it bend"
He said to me—"Thy pray'r deserveth well 70
"All meed of praise, therefore acceptance claims;
"But have thou care and see thy tongue refrains;

" Be the speech mine, I have conception clear
" Of thy desires, they in contempt perchance,
" For they are Greeks, would hold what thou mightst say." 75
After the flame had onward thither come
Where to my master seem'd the place and time,
I heard him speak in form and manner thus:—
" Oh ye two spirits tenanting one flame,
" If I found favour with you during life, 80
" If favour found with you or more or less,
" When in the world my lofty verse I sung,
" Pause ye awhile, and one of you declare
" Where he, self-sacrific'd, went forth to die."
The greater horn then of the ancient flame 85
Began to flicker, with a murm'ring sound,
As sounds the fire when harass'd by the wind;
Then hither, thither vibrating, the point
As it had been a tongue articulate,
Gave forth a voice, which speaking said—" What time 90
" I fled from Circe, who my life had hid
" More than a year near Gaeta ere yet,
" This from Æneas had its name receiv'd;
" My son's sweet ways, the sacred duty claim'd
" By my old father, nor that debt of love 95
" Due to Penelope, her source of joy,
" Could conquer in my soul the burning thirst
" To see and know the deep things of the world,
" To study human worth and human vice

" Forth on the great and open sea I went, 100
" Lonely, with but one ship, and with a band
" Scanty, but faithful to the end and true.
" Both continents I saw as far as Spain,
" I saw Morocco and Sardinia's isle,
" And others by the inland ocean bath'd. 105
" I and my company were infirm and old,
" When we at length came to that narrow strait
" Where Hercules his guardian signals rear'd,
" That beyond this, man might not further go;
" Seville I pass'd upon my dexter hand, 110
" Ceuta was pass'd already on my left.
" Brothers, I said, ye who have perils fac'd
" A thousand thousand, and the far west reach'd,
" In the short portion of this breathing life
" Which still remaineth unto you, say ye 115
" That you will not th' experience refuse
" Of the unpeopl'd earth behind the sun.
" Consider well the seed from whence you sprung;
" You were not made to live as live the beasts,
" But to seek virtue and true knowledge grasp. 120
" So keenly rose the spirit of my crew
" At this my little speech, the path to dare;
" To check them then had been no easy task.
" Towards the rising sun our stern we turn'd,
" Our oars were wings to our adventurous flight, 125
" Still ever gaining on our larboard course.

" Now all the stars which stud the southern pole
" I saw at night, whilst the north lay so low,
" Scarce from the ocean level it uprose.
" Five times re-kindl'd and as often void 130
" Was the clear light of the moon's nether curve,
" Since we had enter'd on this path sublime,
" When, lo! upon our sight a mountain grew
" From distance dim, to me it seem'd so high,
" That it surpass'd all mem'ry could recall. 135
" Our joy was great, but soon was turn'd to grief;
" For from this new land swept a tempest fierce,
" Which on the fore part rushing struck the ship
" Three times this whirl'd with the wild whirling waves,
" At the fourth stroke the poop rose high in air, 140
" The prow sunk downwards, so by Him decreed,
" And over us engulphed the ocean roll'd "

CANTO XXVII

Erect and still the flame now upward rose,
  Ceasing to speak; and now it onward swept,
  Permitted thus by the sweet poet's will,
When, lo! another flame behind it came,
  Our eyes directing to its upper points 5
  By a confused sound which issued thence
As the Sicilian bull, which bellow'd first
  (And this was justice) with the anguish'd cry
  Of him whose tools had fashion'd the device,
Still bellow'd with the tortur'd suff'rer's voice, 10
  So that in very truth, though form'd of brass,
  It seem'd not less by pain and anguish torn;
Thus from the first no way nor outlet theirs
  Forth from the flame, in its own language then
  Chang'd and converted came the piteous words. 15
But after these their passage upward found
  To the flame's point, making it vibrate so
  As the tongue vibrates when the utt'rance comes,

We heard them thus—" Oh, thou to whom I turn
" My voice, who spak'st but now the Lombard tongue, 20
" Saying, 'Farewell! I trouble thee no more!
" Although perchance somewhat too late I come,
" Ah be thou patient, stay and with me speak;
" See, I am patient, tortur'd though by fire.
" If thou be come into this world of gloom 25
" Hither cast down from that sweet Latin land
" Where all my guilt found origin and scope;
" The Romagnuoli! have they peace or war?
" Say, for my home was 'twixt Urbino's hills
" And that high summit whence the Tiber springs." 30
Still was I bent in observation close,
When on my side I felt my leader's touch,
Who said—" He is Italian, therefore speak."
And I who had my answer all prepar'd,
Delay'd me not, but thus at once began— 35
" Oh, spirit! thou who yonder hidden art,
" Not without war is thy Romagna now,
" Nor ever has been in its tyrants' hearts;
" But there was none declar'd, none when I left
" As it hath stood long years Ravenna stands; 40
" Polenta's eagle hatches there her brood,
" And Cervia, too, is cover'd by her wing.
" The land by long contentions worn and stain'd,
" Where bleeding piles of slaughter'd Frenchmen rot,
" Once more the rule of Forlì's tyrant owns. 45

" And still Verruchio's mastiffs old and young,
" Who o'er Montagna held such evil sway,
" As wont to do, with their fangs crush and bore.
" Lamone's city, and Santerno, too,
" The lion's whelp of the field argent rules, 50
" Who changes party as the seasons change ;
" And she of whom the Savio bathes the flanks,
" As she 'twixt plain and mountain holds her seat,
" So between tyranny and freedom lives.
" And now I pray thee, tell us who thou art ; 55
" Be not more hard than others are to thee,
" So may thy name hold front place in the world."
After the fire had roar'd some little space,
As wont to do, then flicker'd the sharp point
Hither and thither, and thus forth it breath'd : 60
" Did I believe my answer now were made
" To one again to tread the upper world,
" Then should this flame flicker and wave no more ;
" But since there never from this utter depth
" Return'd one living thing, if such the truth, 65
" Then will I answer thee and fear no shame.
" A warrior first I was, then Cordelier ;
" Thus girt I thought to wash away my sins,
" And surely faith like mine gave certain hope,
" Had not the Pontiff—whom may evil seize !— 70
" Drawn me once more into my former ways ;
" And how and why, I will thou shouldest hear.

" So long as I was form'd of flesh and bone,
" My mother's gift to me, the work I did
" Savour'd not of the lion but the fox. 75
" Foresight to win and ev'ry hidden way
" I knew and practised, and my craft so great,
" That to earth's boundaries the fame went forth.
" When as time onward roll'd I reach'd the point
" Of my life's span, when ev'ry one is call'd 80
" The sails to lower and the ropes to coil,
" What first had pleas'd me now to me was grief;
" I had become repentant and confess'd,
" Ah, wretched man! how great had been my gain!
" Of the new tribe of Pharisees the prince, 85
" Who wages war near to the Lateran,
" And not with Saracen nor yet with Jew,
" Because his ev'ry foe bore Christian name,
" None were midst those who conquer'd Acre's hold,
" Nor with the traders in the Soldan's land; 90
" Not his high office, not his sacred call,
" Restraint to him, neither to me that cord
" Which is so wont the wearers' flesh to waste.
" But as Constantine sought Sylvester's aid
" Within Soracte, his disease to cure, 95
" So this one urg'd me with a master's pray'r
" To cure the fever of his haughty pride.
" He sought for counsel, and I silence held,
" Because his words seem'd drunken in their rage.

" At last he spake —' Be not thy heart in doubt; 100
" ' Thee I absolve till now; 'tis thine to show
" ' How Penestrino may be brought to dust.
" ' Heav'n I have pow'r to open and to shut;
" ' Thou knowest this, therefore there are two keys,
" ' And these my predecessor held but cheap.' 105
" And then I felt by reasons grave constrain'd,
" For silence here an evil counsellor seem'd;
" And so I said—' Father, since thou hast wash'd
" ' My sin away, in which so apt to fall,
" ' Large promise and small faith will to thee give, 110
" ' Assured triumph on thy throne sublime.'
" Struck down by death, St. Francis claim'd my soul,
" But one of the black cherubim exclaim'd,—
" ' This is no freight of thine; do me no wrong
" ' Thrust down below amidst my slaves his doom, 115
" ' Because he counsell'd counsels full of fraud;
" ' Since then till now I have him surely held;
" ' Those who repent not may not be absolved;
" ' None can repent and still the sin retain,
" ' The law of opposites must this forbid.' 120
" Mo miserable! with what shudd'ring seiz'd
" When he laid hold on me, saying—' Perchance
" ' Thou thoughtest not the devil could logic chop!'
" He bore me down to Minos, who his tail
" Coil'd eight times round his hard and scaly back, 125
" And then with fierce and rabid fury bit,

"Saying—'His torment is th' involving fire.'
"Here, then, thou seest me a spirit lost,
"Wand'ring thus cloth'd with anguish in my heart."
When with these words his history was clos'd, 130
The flame departed moaning heavily,
Twisting and tossing down its pointed horn.
Onwards our course we took, I and my guide,
Over the rock up to the other arch
Which spans the fosse where those make payment dear 135
Who raise up discord and their conscience load.

CANTO XXVIII.

Who could, although by rhyme unfetter'd, tell
  Fully of all that blood, those griefs and woes,
  Which now I saw, though it were often told?
Each tongue 'tis certain in th' attempt would err,
  For our command of speech, our force of mind, 5
  Have not capacity so much to seize.
If all were now assembl'd in one spot,
  Those in Apulia's most ill-fated land,
  Who once their wounds bemoan'd, and their life blood
By Romans shed; those of that ling'ring war 10
  Whose spoils were measures heap'd with knightly rings,
  As Livy writes, and his no erring pen,
With those who felt in deadly wounds their crime,
  In daring Robert Guiscard to resist;
  And still those others, whose dead bones are heap'd 15
At Ceperano, where a liar proved
  Each Pugliese, at Tagliacozzo too,
  Where, without arms, old Alard victor stood;

Were one to shew his pierced member, one
  His sever'd limb, all this were naught compared 20
  With the foul fashion of this ninth abyss.
For cask with loss of side or middle stave,
  Does not so gape as one I now beheld,
  From chin cut open to the foul wind's vent.
Between the legs the smaller bowels hung; 25
  The liver was display'd, and fetid sack,
  Which of the food we swallow ordure makes.
Whilst upon him my whole attention hung,
  He look'd, and with his hands tore wide his chest,
  Saying, "Behold now, how myself I cleave; 30
"Behold, how Mahomet is torn and maim'd.
  "Before me deeply mourning Ali goes,
  "His face from front-lock cloven to the chin.
"And all those others whom thou seest here
  "Were, when alive, of scandal and of schism 35
  "The source and seed, and so are cloven thus.
"Behind a devil stands, who cleaves in twain
  "With cruel rage, and to the sword's edge puts
  "Each of our sect with a renewal fresh,
"Whene'er we have the dolorous circuit made; 40
  "For it is so that our deep wounds must close,
  "Before we turn to find the same renew'd.
"But who art thou, who musest on the rock,
  "Perchance the woe and suffering to delay,
  "Adjudg'd to thee on thine own evidence?" 45

" Death hath not touch'd him yet, sin hath not led,"
My master answer'd, " to his torment here;
" But that he may attain experience full,
" I who am dead, am bidden him to lead
" Through all the zones of the great depths of hell, 50
" And as I tell it thee, so is the truth."
When they heard this, more than a hundred souls
Tarried within the trench on me to gaze,
Forgetful in their wonder of their woe
" Say thou to Fra Dolcino that he keep, 55
" Oh thou who soon perchance shalt see the sun,
" If soon to follow me be not his wish,
" Good store of food, lest by the snow constrain'd,
" He yield the vict'ry to the Novarrese,
" Who else would find it no such easy gain." 60
One foot suspended as in act to move,
Such words spake Mahomet to my list'ning ear;
Then to move onward plac'd his foot on earth.
Another one in whom the throat was pierc'd,
And the nose sever'd to the eye and brow, 65
And one ear only shewing on his head,
Tarried in wonder as the others did,
In front to gaze, and lo his gullet yawn'd,
Crimson'd without and everywhere with blood,
And said, " Oh, thou, not yet by sin condemn'd, 70
" Whom in times past I saw in Latin land,
" Unless by false resemblance now deciv'd,

" Forget not Pier da Medicina there,
" Should'st thou once more behold the pleasant plain,
" Which from Vercello slopes to Marcabò; 75
" Make it to Fano's two best sons be known,
" To Messer Guido and 'Ser Angiolell,
" If pow'r prophetic be not here in vain,
" That from their vessels they shall forth be cast,
" And near Cattolica by force be drown'd, 80
" Through the fell treachery of a tyrant's will.
" 'Twixt Isle of Cyprus and Majorca's isle,
" Never by Neptune seen was fouler crime,
" By Argive rover nor by pirate done.
" That traitor, one-eyed, and by whom the land 85
" Was held possess'd, which one now with me here
" Repents so deeply he had ever seen,
" Will coax and cheat them to an interview,
" And then so do, that to Foscara's wind
" They shall not need or vow or pray'r to make." 90
And then I said, "Declare to me and shew,
" If thou would'st have me tell of thee above,
" Who may he be who bears this bitter look?"
Then did he place his hand upon the jaw
Of his companion and the mouth threw wide, 95
Shouting, "This, this is he, and he is dumb!
" Behold the outlaw, who the doubts remov'd
" From Cæsar's mind, affirming this the truth,
" 'He who is ready loses by delay.'"

How full to me he seem'd of wond'ring dread, 100
With his tongue sever'd where the windpipe meets,
That Curio, once so daring with his words!
And one with hands dissever'd right and left,
The stumps uplifting through the dusky air,
So that the blood the face disfigur'd stain'd, 105
Cried, "In remembrance bear thou Mosca too,
"Who said, alas! 'Thing done beginning hath,'
"Which prov'd an evil seed to Tuscan land."
To this I added, "And to thy race death!"
Whereon he gath'ring up woe upon woe, 110
Went on with bearing spiritless and sad.
Still I remain'd to watch the ghostly troop,
And I beheld what, without other proof,
I had been somewhat careful how to tell,
Wer't not that conscience makes assurance sure, 115
That blest companion which man freedom gives
Under the armour of a pure intent.
Truly I saw—indeed still seem to see
A body without head pass on, as pass'd
The others of that sad and sorrowing band. 120
And by the hair he held the sever'd head
From the hand pendent, as a lantern hangs,
And, as he look'd on us, he said, "Alas!
"He for himself made of himself a lamp
"And they were two in one, and one in two; 125
"How this may be, He, the Great Ruler knows!"

When he had reach'd close to the bridge's foot,
He lifted high his arm with the head clear,
That to our ears the words might nearer sound,
Which were, "Behold thou now this grievous woe 130
" Oh, thou who, breathing, walkest seeing the dead,
" See thou if any woe be great as this.
" And that thou mayest tidings of me bear,
" Bertram of Bornio know thou that I am,
" Who to King John such evil counsel gave. 135
" I sow'd the discord between sire and son;
" Not with more wicked thought Ahitophel
" David and Absalom did goad to strife.
" Because I parted those by nature bound,
" I carry this my brain sever'd, alas! 140
" From the life source, which in the trunk resides.
" 'Eye for an eye'—in me the law behold!"

CANTO XXIX

The mighty crowd, the strange and diverse wounds,
  Had made mine eyes so drunken with their tears,
  They crav'd with longing for a pause to weep.
But Virgil said, "Why still this wond'ring gaze?
  "Why still, with look thus earnest, feed thy sight 5
  "With the sad mangl'd spirits there below?
"In th' other trenches 'twas not so with thee;
  "Think now, if thou the reck'ning good have kept,
  "Miles twenty-two complete the valley's round,
"And 'neath our feet the moon already rolls; 10
  "Brief is the time now to our quest allow'd,
  "And things are yet to see thou hast not seen."
"Had'st thou," I answer'd quick, "consider'd well,
  "The reason why I kept such earnest gaze,
  "It may be thou hadst pardon'd longer stay." 15
The chief his course continued, whilst behind
  I foll'wing came, thus answering the while
  And adding further—"Yonder cleft within

" Where I have kept mine eyes so closely fix'd
" Methinks a spirit of my blood and race
" Weeps for the sin, there costing him so dear"
Then said my master—" Waste not kindly thought
" From this time forward upon him; but seek
" Some other object, and there let him rest;
" For I perceiv'd him at the bridge's foot
" Point thee and threaten thee with finger rais'd,
" And heard him there Geri del Bello nam'd.
" That time thy whole soul's thoughts were so absorb'd
" On him who once had Altaforte held,
" That when thou lookedst there, lo, he was gone!"
" Oh, my great chief, that death by violence
" Not yet," I said, " by any one aveng'd,
" Who, as in blood, so in the shame must share,
" Made him disdainful; so in scorn he pass'd
" Speaking no word to me, as I do think;
" And so more pitiful hath made me feel."
Such words we spake until we reach'd the spot
Where first the rock the other valley shows,
And, if the light were brighter, to its depths
When we from thence on the last cloister look'd
Of Malèbolgè, so that to our eye
Distinct and clear its brotherhood appear'd,
Varied and strange laments did pierce me through,
Having their arrows with sad pity steel'd,
So that mine ears I cover'd with my hands.

Such grief might be if from the Lazar House
  Of Val-de-Chiana in the summer's heats,
  And of Maremma and Sardinia too,
Into one ditch were cast each foul disease.
  So was it here; and so the stench which rose 50
  Was as the stench which comes from rotting limbs.
Onwards we took our course from the last bank
  Of the long rock still by the left hand down,
  And then it was my sight became more quick
To pierce the depths, where, lo! the minister 55
  Of the great king—Justice infallible!—
  Dooms all false-workers written in her book.
Never was sight more miserable seen
  Among Egina's people, sick to death,
  When full of foul malignity the air, 60
So that things living, down to the small worm,
  All dropp'd and died, and then the ancient stock,
  (As for a truth the poets tell the tale,)
Once more found being from the seed of ants;
  Than in this gloomy valley might be seen 65
  Amidst the swarming heaps of pining ghosts
One on the belly, on the shoulders one,
  Each on the other lay, whilst on all fours
  One dragg'd himself along the dismal road.
Softly and in deep silence on we went, 70
  Looking and list'ning to those suff'ring souls,
  Who had no pow'r to raise themselves upright.

I saw two seated, on each other propp'd
  As pans for baking on each other rest,
  Spotted from head to foot with leprous crust; 75
Never so deftly saw I horse-comb us'd
  By groom whose master in expectance waits,
  Nor yet by him unwillingly on watch,
As I saw each one tear and tear himself
  With biting nails, in the all madd'ning rage 80
  Of itching, for the which none other help;
Down with their nails they scrap'd the scab away,
  As from the bream the knife scrapes off the scales,
  Or other fish with larger scales beset.
"Oh, thou whose fingers rend the mailed crust," 85
  Speaking to one of them my leader said,
  "And often mak'st them do the pincer's work,
"Tell me, midst these does an Italian dwell
  "Here in this place? so may thy nails suffice
  "For this thy labour through eternity!" 90
"We whom thou seest thus so sorely marr'd
  "Italians are," one, weeping, answer gave;
  "But who art thou who makest such demand?"
He answer'd—"I am one who goeth down
  "With this a living man from cliff to cliff, 95
  "And this my purpose is, to shew him hell."
Then was their mutual support destroy'd,
  And each one trembling round towards me turn'd,
  Those, too, who heard the echo of my words.

All close to me my gentle master drew, 100
  Saying—" Now ask as thou hast wish to ask."
  Knowing his will, thus I began to speak—
" That your remembrance may not steal from out
  " The minds of men in the more early world,
  " But many suns revolving still survive ; 105
" Tell us, who are you ? what your race and names ?
  " Let not your filthy and most loathsome doom
  " Shame you to silence, but yourselves declare ! "
Then one replied—" I of Arezzo am,
  " Albero of Sienna doom'd me to the stake ; 110
  " But that for which I died brought me not here.
" 'Tis true I said to him, speaking in jest,
  " That in the air I knew the art of flight ;
  " But he, of restless mind and little sense,
" Will'd I the art should shew ; for this alone, 115
  " That him a Dædalus I did not make,
  " My doom was fire by one who own'd him son.
" But in the last and tenth abyss to lie,
  " Because I practis'd alchemy on earth,
  " Minos condemn'd me, none may him deceive " 120
I to the poet said—" Was ever known
  " People more empty than those Siennese !
  " Ev'n the vain Frenchman is not vain as they."
On hearing this the other leprous soul
  Thus answer'd to my word—" Stricca except ! 125
  " Who to expense knew how to set the bound ;

" And Niccolo except, who the rich use
  " Of the luxurious clove discover'd first
  " In that flat soil where such seeds gladly spring,
" And that band, too, with whom Caccia d'Ascàn 130
  " Vineyards to ruin, forests brought to waste,
  " And scope was found for Abbaghato's sense.
" But that thou know who seconds thy dislike
  " Against the Siennese, turn a quick eye
  " So that my face be clear unto thy search; 135
" Then thou shalt see in me Capocchio's ghost,
  " Who by his alchemy false metals made,
  " And thou canst not forget, if I read right,
" How well I knew nature to imitate."

CANTO XXX.

What time that Juno's jealous rage was rous'd
By Semelè against the blood of Thebes,
Of which not once but oft she gave the proof,
So raging mad did Athamas become,
That meeting once his wife with his sons twain, 5
Each one of them the burden of an arm,
He cried, "Ho, spread the net! that I may take
"As they now pass, the lioness and whelps;"
And then he forward spread his mere'less claws,
Seizing Learchus, so the one was nam'd, 10
He swung him round and dash'd him on the rock;
She with the other sought the fatal wave.
At that time too when fortune roll'd beneath
The haughty pride of Troy, which all things dar'd,
So that together king and kingdom fell; 15
Sad Hecuba, captive and full of woe,
After she saw the dead Polyxena,
And of her Polydorus, on the shore

Of the great sea, the woeful relics found,
  Bark'd in her raving madness like a dog; 20
  Her mind thus twisted by excess of grief.
But not in Thebes, never in Troy were seen
  Furies in any one so cruelly fierce,
  In outrage to the limbs of beast or man,
As in two ghosts I saw naked and gaunt, 25
  Who fiercely biting, ran, as oft we see
  The raging hog excluded from its stye.
One having reach'd Capocchio, on the neck
  Where shews the joint, fasten'd and bore him down,
  Making his belly on the hard ground grate; 30
And Aretino, who trembling linger'd still,
  Said, "Gianni Schicchi is that imp of hell,
  "Thus he tames others in his rabid rage!"
"Ah! so may ne'er that other's teeth," I said,
  "On thee be fix'd; but if not troubling thee, 35
  "Tell unto me its name, ere hence it flit."
He said, "This spirit in the ancient time
  "Was the most wicked Myrra, who became
  "Her father's love beyond all nature's law.
"She, for her sin's indulgence, so contriv'd, 40
  "Falsely to counterfeit another's form,
  "Ev'n as did he, who yonder goes, assume,
"To gain the peerless lady of the troop
  "Unto himself, Buoso Donati's shape,
  "Forging the will with ev'ry form of law." 45

And after these two raging spirits pass'd,
On which mine eye so fixedly was held,
I turn'd it tow'rds the other ill-born souls.
One I saw made in fashion like a lute,
Were it but so that he had had the groin, 50
Near that part sever'd where the man is fork'd.
A heavy dropsy, which unmatch'd the limbs
With foul and ill-condition'd humours gross,
So that the belly suited not the face,
Forc'd him to hold the tumid lips apart, 55
As the poor hectic, in his burning thirst,
One to the chin turns down, the other up.
" Oh ye who are from pain and suff'ring free,
" I know not wherefore, in this world of woe,"
He said to us, "look now, consider well, 60
" Messer Adamo and his misery;
" All that I wish'd, when living, I possess'd,
" One drop of water now, alas, I crave.
" The rivulets which from the verdant hills
" Of Casentino to the Arno roll, 65
" Coolness and freshness scattering as they flow,
" Always I see, and with no purpose vain;
" For their sweet image gives me sharper thirst
" Than all the sickness, whence the fleshless face.
" That rigid justice, under which I smart, 70
" Draws reason from the place where I have sinn'd,
" To make my sighs pass with a swifter flight.

" There is Romena, where I falsely coin'd
" The money which the Baptist's image bore,
" Above for this my body paid by fire ; 75
" But might I here but see th' unhappy souls
" Of Alessandro, and his brothers both
" For Branda's fount I would not give the sight.
" One is already here, if the mad shades
" Which circling flit around utter the truth , 80
" But what avails it me, my limbs are bound !
" But were I swift of foot e'n to so far
" As in a hundred years one inch to move,
" Already on his path my steps had been,
" To seek him 'midst this gross and shapeless crew, 85
" Although the circuit count eleven miles,
" Nor less than half a mile the traverse here.
" I am through them of a vile company ;
" They led me on the florins false to coin,
" Which had three carats of debas'd alloy." 90
And then I ask'd, " Who are that wretched pair,
" Who give forth vapour like a hand in snow,
" Lying so close to thee at thy right side ?"
" I found them here and they have never turn'd,"
He said, " since on this shatter'd ridge I fell, 95
" Nor through eternity methinks will change.
" She is the false one, Joseph who accus'd ;
" He is the false one, Simon Greek of Troy ;
" From their hot fever comes this fetid steam."

And one of them, whom anger seem'd to touch, 100
  Because, perhaps, somewhat too lightly nam'd,
  Struck with his fist upon the tighten'd paunch.
This sounded out as it had been a drum;
  And Messer Adam struck him on the face,
  With his rus'd arm, which truly seem'd as hard, 105
Saying to him, "Although from me be reft
  "All pow'r of motion in my loaded limbs,
  "For work like this I have my arm unbound."
Whereon he answer'd, "When thou wentest forth
  "To taste the fire, it was not then so quick; 110
  "But at thy coining quick it was and more."
The other said, "In this thou sayest true;
  "But not so true thy evidence that hour,
  "When thou wert ask'd to speak the truth at Troy."
"If I spake false, and thou mad'st false the coin," 115
  So Sinon spake, "I for one crime am here;
  "Thy many crimes no soul accurs'd can match."
"Call to thy mind, oh, perjurer, the horse,"
  He with the swollen paunch then answer made;
  "Be this thy curse! the whole world knows the deed" 120
"And this thy curse! the thirst which cracks thy tongue,"
  The Greek rejoin'd, "and thy foul belly's flow,
  "Which makes a hedge to hide thee from thyself."
And thou the forger said, "Thus gapes thy mouth
  "Evil to speak as ever was its wont; 125
  "If I have thirst, if humour makes me gross,

" Thou too hast burning drought, thy head has pain ;
" To lap the mirror of Narcissus thou
" Needest but small inducement and few words."
Fix'd and intent on hearing, there I stood, 130
When spake my master, " Look if so thou wilt !
" It needs not much betwixt us strife to breed."
When I perceiv'd him thus in anger speak,
I turn'd towards him with a flush of shame,
Ev'n now the mem'ry makes me all confus'd. 135
And like to him who dreams some evil thing,
And in his dream wishes it were a dream,
Craving what is as if it never were ;
So was it now with me, I had no power
To speak and make excuse, and yet excuse 140
Beyond my own belief, myself I found.
" A greater fault less shame might wash away,"
My master said to me, " than thine has been ;
" Therefore be thou disburden'd of all grief ;
" And ever at thy side believe me near, 145
" When by the chance of fortune thou art cast
" 'Midst men like these in strife like this engaged ;
" Base mind is his who loves such strife to hear."

CANTO XXXI.

The self-same tongue which spake these biting words,
  And made my either cheek crimson with shame,
  Gave me the medicine to heal the wound.
Thus have I heard was vested in the spears
  Both of Achilles and his sire, the power 5
  First to cause grief and then good comfort give.
Our back we turn'd upon the wretched vale,
  Up by the rock which circled it around,
  Passing across it without further talk.
Here was it less than night and less than day, 10
  So that my forward look had little scope;
  But from above a horn gave forth a sound,
Compared with which all other noise were faint;
  This, by a path to its own course oppos'd,
  Mine eyes directed wholly to one spot. 15
After that rout most dolorous, which lost
  To the great Charles the holy enterprise,
  Orlando sounded not so fierce a blast.

T'was but a moment since I upward look'd,
  Yet many lofty tow'rs I seemed to see. 20
  "Master," I said, "tell me what land is this?"
And then he said, "Thy vision passeth through
  "Too long a space of the dark air, and hence
  "In thy imaginings thou wand'rest wild.
"Once there arriv'd, then surely thou wilt know, 25
  "How much the sense by distance is deceiv'd;
  "A little further therefore urge thy steps."
Then very tenderly he took my hand,
  And said, "Before we speed our onward course,
  "That unto thee the fact less strange appear; 30
"Know thou that these are giants and not towers,
  "And in the pit, rang'd by the bank around,
  "Are altogether from the navel plunged."
As when the clearing mist passeth away,
  Slowly the sight gathers again to shape 35
  What the air-clogging vapour hid from view.
So piercing through the gross and gloomy air,
  Nearer and nearer, drawing tow'rds the bank,
  My error left me, and my terror came;
For as aloft upon th' encircling walls 40
  Is Montereggion, with its turrets crowned;
  So was the margin which the pit surrounds,
Embattl'd with the half protruding forms
  Of giants horrible, whom threatens still
  Great Jove from heav'n whene'er his thunder rolls. 45

Of one already I the face discern'd,
  The shoulders, breast, and belly's greater part,
  And by the sides suspended, both the arms.
When nature ceas'd creative power to spend
  On so great creatures, truly she did well, 50
  To take from Mars such workers of his will.
And if the brood of elephants and whales
  Still be her care, he who more subtly notes,
  Will only hold her wiser and more just;
For when the reasoning faculty combines 55
  With evil will and with destructive pow'r,
  Then there remains no more defence for man.
His face appear'd to me both thick and long,
  As in St. Peter's bronzèd pine at Rome;
  And in proportion were the other parts, 60
So that the bank, which was the cov'ring cloth
  From the girth downward, of the body shew'd
  Upward so much that but to reach the hair,
Three Frisons had found all endeavour vain;
  Because I saw of him thirty long palms 65
  Down from the place where man his mantle clasps.
"Rafel mai amech zabi almi,"
  Began to shout the fierce and savage mouth,
  To which was fitted not a sweeter strain.
And the chief turning said, "Thou foolish soul! 70
  "Hold to thy horn, with it thyself relieve,
  "When by thy rage or other passion touched

" Search at thy neck, there thou wilt find the thong
" Which keeps it fasten'd—oh thou soul confused!
" Lo! there it girds thy giant chest around." 75
And then he said, "His own accuser he!
" Nimrod behold! whose wicked thought is cause
" That by the world one language is not us'd.
" There let him rest! let us not vainly speak;
" For ev'ry language is to him the same, 80
" As his to others, known is it to none."
We then went onward by a longer sweep,
Face to the left; and at a cross bow's flight
We found another greater and more fierce.
To girdle him, whose was the master pow'r, 85
I know nor say; but he was holden bound,
One arm in front, the dexter arm behind;
This by a chain, which kept him fetter'd close
From the neck down, so the part seen above
Was five times circled by th' involving coils. 90
" This haughty spirit sought to match the might
" Of his own power against the might of Jove."
My leader said, "Whence such is his reward!
" This is Ephialtes, mightily who strove
" What time the giants caus'd the gods to fear; 95
" Those arms, so active once, no more he moves."
Then I to him, "I would, if so it might,
" That of Briareus, the unmeasured bulk,
" Should to mine eye's experience be made clear."

He answer'd me, "Antæus thou shalt see 100
"Near to us here, who speaks, and who unbound,
"Will place us in the utter depths of sin.
"He whom thou wouldest see is distant far,
"Fetter'd and bound, but like to this one made,
"Save that more fierce in countenance he seems." 105
Impetuous and strong no earthquake crash
Ever made tow'r to its foundations nod,
As now Ephialtes his vast body shook.
Then more than ever came the fear of death,
And it had been enough the fear alone, 110
Had not mine eyes beheld the binding chains.
Then we mov'd further forward, and at length
We reach'd Antæus, who full five ells clear
Without the head forth from the cavern rose.
"Oh, thou who in the vale where Fortune's will, 115
"Gave to victorious Scipio glory's crown;
"When Hannibal and his roll'd back in flight,
"A thousand lions countedst for thy spoil,
"And who, if thou hadst shared the war sublime
"Waged by thy brothers, as ev'n now believed, 120
"Had given the victory to the sons of earth;
"Lead us below, be not reluctant thou,
"Where icy cold Cocytus binds in chains.
"No need for Tityus' nor for Typhon's aid;
"This one can grant what is so long'd for here; 125
"Bend now thyself, smooth thy disdainful lip;

" He in the world hath pow'r to give thee fame,
" For he both lives and long life hopes to have,
" If before time grace call him not away."
Thus spake the master; and the monster quick 130
His arms extended and my leader seiz'd—
So Hercules once the mighty grapple prov'd.
When Virgil felt the grasp, to me he said,
" Place now thyself that I may hold thee safe."
And so we made one burden, he and I. 135
As Carisenda, unto one who stands
Beneath th' incline, when o'er the summit floats
A passing cloud, against it seems to lean,
So seem'd Antæus as I watching stood
To see him bend, and at the time my wish 140
Was that some other way had been my choice;
But lightly he in the devouring gulf
Of Lucifer and Judas, set us down;
Nor thus inclin'd made he a long delay,
But like a ship's mast upright rear'd his form. 145

CANTO XXXII.

Did I abound in rhymes both hoarse and rough,
  Such as might suit this miserable pit,
  Press'd in by all the upper rocks of hell,
I would bring forth more fully all the wealth
  Of my conception; but since I have none, 5
  Not without fear I give my speech its course;
For 'tis no enterprise to point a jest,
  The utter depths of the whole world to paint,
  Nor to be spoken by the mouth of babes.
But may those muses aid me in my verse 10
  Who gave Amphion help to wall up Thebes,
  So that my speech be truthful to the fact!
Oh, above all, most mis-begotten crew,
  Bound in this place, where speech is hard to find!
  Better had you been made beasts of the field. 15
Whilst down within the gloomy pit we stood
  Below the giant's feet, down far below,
  And I was gazing still at the high wall,

I heard one say—"See how thou passest here;
"See that thou tramplest not with thy feet soles 20
"Upon the sad and woe-worn brethren's heads."
On which I turn'd, and, lo! before me lay
And underfoot, a lake, which, ice-congealed,
Bore not the look of water but of glass.
Ne'er in its course so thick a cov'ring bore 25
The wint'ry Danube in the Austrian land,
Nor yet the Tanaïs in its frozen clime,
As now I saw; for had Tabermich been
Or Pietrapana here in ruin hurled,
There had not on the edge been crack or creak. 30
And as the frog croaks in its wat'ry home
With muzzle out, when in her summer dream
The village girl oft to the gleaning goes;
So the pale ghosts, to the shame speaking cheeks,
Livid and woeful, in the ice were fixed, 35
And like a crane's bill chatt'ring played their teeth.
Each one of these his face held downwards bent;
Of the great cold the mouth, and of the woe
Of the dead heart the eyes gave evidence.
When I had looked around some little space, 40
Then to my feet, I saw two joined so close,
Ev'n on their heads the hairs seem'd interlaced.
"Tell me, oh ye, thus bounden breast to breast,
"Who are you, say!" and they their necks mov'd round,
And when their faces looked on mine direct, 45

Their tears, which had been moist within their eyes,
  Gushed by the eyelids out, and then the frost
  Tear unto tear fast freezing held them joined.
Never did cramp wood to its wood confine
  Strongly as this; so these two, like two goats, 50
  Butted and fought, o'er-master'd by their rage.
And one whose ears were both and wholly lost
  By the great frost, with his face still held down,
  Said—"Why on us so earnest fix thy gaze?
"If thou wouldst know who be those spirits twain, 55
  "That valley where Bisenzio downward flows,
  "Their father Albert's was, and then their own.
"One womb was theirs; and in all Caina's depth
  "Make search, and thou wilt find no spirit there
  "Whom this cold gelatine more truly fits; 60
"Not he whose breast was to his shadow pierced
  "By the one blow of royal Arthur's arm;
  "Focaccia not, nor he who with his head
"So bars my vision I no further see,
  "And who was Sassol Mascheroni named, 65
  "If Tuscan, well thou knowest who he was.
"And as I have no wish for further talk,
  "Camicion dei Pazzi know me thou,
  "Carlin I wait, his guilt will mine excuse."
Then saw I faces countless, deadly blue 70
  From the great cold, whence a great horror crept,
  And still creeps o'er me, from those frozen pools.

And whilst towards the central point we went,
  To which each weight centres and gravitates,
  And I was trembling in th' eternal shades, 75
Whether 'twere will, or destiny, or chance,
  I know not; but in threading through the heads
  Against a face I roughly struck my foot:
Weeping, he cried to me—"Why bruise me thus?
  "Why, if not hither come to swell revenge 80
  "For Mont 'Aperti, thus disquiet me?"
"Master," I said, let me awhile delay,
  "To rid me of a doubt by this one raised,
  "Then with such haste as pleaseth thee proceed."
My guide stood still; whereon I spake the ghost, 85
  Who had not ceased to utter evil words:
  "Thou who revilest others, who art thou?"—
"And thou, who now through Antenora walk'st
  "Thus smiting others, who art thou?" he said,
  "With, wert thou living man, too rough an act?"— 90
"Living I am; and it may welcome prove,"
  Was my response, "if fame be thy desire,
  "Were thy name placed in my recording verse."
He answer'd me—"Right otherwise my wish;
  "From hence, begone! disquiet me no more; 95
  "Thy flatt'ry suiteth not these frozen depths."
On this I seiz'd him by the hinder hair,
  Saying the while—"Thy name thou shalt proclaim;
  "If not, no hair remaineth here of thine."

Whereon he said—" Although thou tearest all, 100
" I will not tell my name nor show my face,
" Though on my head thou strik'st a thousand times."
I had his hair tight twisted in my hand,
And from the scalp more than one lock had torn,
He howling and his eyes downward and sunk, 105
When, lo! another cried—" Bocca, what now?
" Sound they not loud enough thy chatt'ring jaws,
" That thou must howl, who is thy taunting fiend?"
" Enough," I said, " I care to hear no more,
" Most wicked traitor! for to thy despite 110
" True news of thee shall I convey above."
" Begone," he answer'd, " what thou choosest say,
" But keep not silence, thouldst thou go from hence,
" On him just now so ready with his tongue.
" Here he laments the Frenchman's golden bribe; 115
" 'Him of Duera,' thou may'st say, I saw,
" 'Where, in the with'ring cold, the sinners dwell.'
" Shouldst thou be ask'd who else was bounden here;
" Lo! there Beccaria at thy side thou hast,
" Whose neck at Florence felt the severing axe. 120
" Yonder thou hast Gianni del Soldanier
" With Ganellone, and that Tribaldell,
" Who oped Faenza's gates at deed of night."
We had already left him, when I saw
Two in one hole so holden by the ice 125
That the one head seem'd by the other capp'd;

And as in hunger bread is fiercely gnawed,
  So he above fasten'd on him beneath
  His teeth where brain and neck their junction form.
And just as Tydeus in his fierce disdain 130
  Did Menalippus' temples raging gnaw,
  So dealt he with the skull and other parts.
" Oh thou who provest by this brutal sign
  " Thy hate to him thou feedest on in act,
  " Tell me the cause," I said ; " our compact this, 135
" That if against him thou hast just complaint,
  " Who thou art, knowing, and what his offence,
  " Right will I do thee in the upper world,
" If still the organ of my speech be moist."

CANTO XXXIII

His mouth he lifted from his cruel feast,
  That sinner, and he wiped it on the hairs
  Of the back-scalp, which he had gnawed and torn.
He then began, "Thou will'st that I renew
  "That deadly anguish, which now chokes my heart, 5
  "In thought alone, ere by my lips declared,
"But if my words may prove the seed which bears
  "Shame unto him, the traitor whom I gnaw,
  "My tears and words commingled thou shalt see.
"I know not who thou art, I know not how 10
  "Thou camest hither, but to me it seems
  "That to the ear true Florentine thou art.
"Know then that I Count Ugolino was,
  "And Ruggieri, the Archbishop this;
  "Now list why I to him so closely cling. 15
"That through the working of his evil thoughts,
  "Putting in him my trust, I was betrayed
  "And done to death, I have no need to say,

" But that of which thou hast no means to know,
" Of that, my death so full of cruel grief, 20
" Hear now, and judge if he have done me wrong.
" A feeble aperture within the mew,
" Which now through me the name of famine bears,
" And which on others still must close its bars,
" Had through its chink already to mine eye 25
" Shown many moons, when that bad sleep I slept,
" Which of my future tore aside the veil.
" This one appear'd to me master and lord,
" Hunting the wolf and whelps towards that mount,
" Which Lucca's tow'rs from Pisan eyes conceals. 30
" With well trained hounds, hungry and keen of scent,
" Gualandi, with Sismondi and Lanfranch,
" Were placed by him in the first line of chace.
" The course was short, for faint and weary seemed
" Parent and young, and, by the biting fangs, 35
" Their flanks did look to me bleeding and torn.
" When I awoke before the break of day,
" I felt my children weeping in their dreams,
" For they were with me, and they asked for bread.
" Cruel thou art, if now thine eye be dry, 40
" Thinking on that which my sick heart foretold;
" And if thou weepest not, when dost thou weep?
" Now they awoke, and now the hour drew near,
" When custom was to bring our daily food,
" And each one's dream began to cause him doubt, 45

" I felt the hammer close the door below
" Of this tow'r horrible; and then I looked
" My children in the face, but nothing said.
" I did not weep for I was stone within;
" But they did weep, and little Anselm said, 50
" ' Thou lookest strange, my father! art thou ill?'
" Still did I weep not, still no word I spake
" All that long day, and all that longer night,
" Till on the world another sun arose.
" As a faint ray of light found way within 55
" Our doleful prison, and I then discerned
" Four faces with the aspect of my own,
" In my fierce agony both my hands I bit;
" And they who thought I did this craving food,
" Sprung in a moment to their feet, and said, 60
" ' Oh, father! it will lessen much our pain,
" ' If thou wilt eat of us; thou didst us clothe
" ' With this most wretched flesh, unclothe us too.' "
" I calmed myself, not to increase their grief;
" That day and all the next we were quite mute, 65
" Ah, cruel earth, why open'd not thy jaws!
" When to the fourth day we at length were come,
" Stretched at my feet, my Gaddo falling, said,
" ' Why dost thou not, my father, bring me help?'
" And then he died, and, as thou seest me here, 70
" So did I see the three drop one by one,
" Between the fifth day and the sixth, and I

" Now blind, o'er each one's body darkling groped ;
" Three days I called them after they were dead ;
" Then hunger did what sorrow could not do " 75
When he had spoken, with distorted eye,
Once more his teeth fix'd on the wretched skull,
Hungry and strong as a dog gnaws his bone.
Ah, Pisa ! infamy of those who dwell
In the fair region where they sound the " Si ;" 80
Since from thy neighbours punishment is slow,
May both Capraia's and Gorgona's isles,
Shift from their base, and bar up Arno's mouth,
So it may drown all living of thy race !
For if Count Ugolino by report 85
Was traitor to thy strongholds and to thee,
To rack his children was no right of thine.
Their unripe years, thou modern Thebes ! absolved
Young Hugo and Brigata from the guilt,
And the two others in my verses named. 90
Onwards we passed to where th' o'erpow'ring frost
With cruel roughness held another band,
Not with face down, but wholly upward turned.
Their very weeping checks the flow of tears,
And grief, an outlet from the eyes debarr'd, 95
Rolls inward and becomes a double grief ;
For the first tears, all gathered in one group,
And with the semblance of a crystal mask,
Fill up below the brows each hollow space.

And though, indeed, as in a callous growth, 100
  Through the abounding cold, sensation all,
  Ev'n on the instant, in my face had ceased,
Yet did I seem to feel some passing breeze;
  Whereon I said—"Master, who moveth this?
  "In this great deep is not all vapour quenched?" 105
And then he said to me—"Soon thou shalt be
  "Where to thy quest the eye shall answer give,
  "The cause beholding which this vapour moves."
And one sad spirit of the frozen crust
  Exclaim'd—"Oh, souls so cruel! that for you 110
  "Hath been reserv'd the lowest place of hell,
"Lift ye this stony veil from off my face,
  "So I may vent the grief which swells my heart
  "One moment, ere my tears again congeal."
On which I said—"If thou wouldst have my help 115
  "Say who thou art, and if I free thee not,
  "To the great ice's bed may I go down."
He answer'd—"I Fra Alberigo am;
  "And of that evil garden owned the fruit,
  "And here the fig I for the date exchange." 120
"Ah," said I, "art thou also with the dead?"
  To which he answer'd—"In the upper world,
  "How fares my body, knowledge I have none.
"This Tolomea such advantage hath,
  "That herein oftentimes the soul may fall 125
  "Before the thread be cut by Atropos.

" And that thou may'st more willingly disperse
" These icy tears which glaze my wretched face,
" Know this! a soul no sooner treachery doth,
" As I have done, than is the body clutched 130
" And governed by a devil at his will,
" Until the hour-glass of its life be run.
" Plunged in this gulf of utter woe it falls;
" And it may be, still in the flesh above
" That ghost is seen, behind me wintering there. 135
" Thou ought'st to know him, if just hither come;
" He is Ser Branca d'Oria,—many years
" Have come and gone since he was here enclos'd."
" Methinks," I said to him, " thou mockest me!
" Never hath Branca d'Oria tasted death; 140
" He eats, and drinks, and sleeps, and weareth clothes."
" Above in Malèbranche's trench," he said,
" Where boils for ever the tenacious pitch,
" Not yet had Michael Zanche found his place,
" When this one left a devil in his stead 145
" In his own body, and his kinsman's too,
" Who in the deed of treach'ry with him shared.
" But now towards me stretch thou forth thy hand,
" Open mine eyes." His eyes I opened not;
Discourtesy in me was grace to him. 150
Ah, Genoese! ye men with hearts devoid
Of ev'ry virtue, full of ev'ry vice,
Why from the world not utterly cast out?

For with Romagna's very foulest soul
  One I have found of thine who for his deeds 135
  Ev'n now his spirit in Cocytus bathes,
Whilst he yet seems a breathing life above.

CANTO XXXIV.

"Vexilla Regis prodeunt inferni
"Lo, tow'rds us! therefore strain thy forward gaze,"
My master said, "that thou his form behold."
As when a fog in heavy masses breathes,
Or when our hemisphere is dimmed by night, 5
To distant eye the wind-driven mill appears,
So was the structure I now seemed to see;
Then when the air-blast came I shrunk behind
My chief for shelter—other there was none,
Now; and with fear my pen indites the verse, 10
I was where wholly covered were the ghosts,
And seen transparent as a straw in glass,
Some prostrate lay, whilst others were erect,
This with his head, and that one with his soles;
Another like an arch, face turned to feet. 15
When we were so far on our way advanced,
That it did please my master to point out
The creature once in form so beautiful,

He from before me passed, and held me there,
"Lo! Dis," he said; "and lo!" he said, "the place
"Where thou thy spirit must with courage arm."
How terror-frozen I became and faint,
Ask not, oh reader, what I cannot write,
For all that I could say would feeble seem.
I did not die, I scarcely was alive;
Hast thou one spark of fancy, think thou then
How I became who knew nor death nor life.
Lo, the great Emperor of the realm of woe
Rose from his middle breast forth from the ice!
And I came nearer to a giant's bulk,
Than did the giant's to his arm alone;
Judge now how great must be the mighty whole,
With the part seen proportion due to bear;
If first in beauty once as hideous now,
And to his Maker lifting his proud eye,
Well might he be the source of ev'ry grief.
Ah, great indeed to me the marvel seemed
When I beheld three faces to his head!
In front was one, and of vermilion hue;
The other two, which were to this one joined,
Above the middle of each shoulder rose,
And at the head's crest form'd themselves in one
Of white and yellow mingled seem'd the right;
The left one looked like unto those who dwell
Where to its valley widening rolls the Nile.

Beneath each one of these, two wings came forth,
  Mighty as suited to so vast a bird;
  Sails of the ocean such I never saw.
They had not quills, but were in structure formed
  As a bat's wing; and as he flapped them, then 50
  Three icy blasts of wind moved forth from him,
Whence is Cocytus to its depths congealed.
  With his six eyes he wept, and his three chins
  Dripp'd down with mingled tears and bloody foam.
In his each mouth he with his cruel teeth 55
  A sinner crushed, as the brake tears the flax,
  So that at one time three the torture felt.
To him in front the bite was naught compared
  With the sharp tearing, which at times the back
  Left scarified and of its skin despoiled. 60
"That soul high up, who greatest torment hath,
  "Judas Iscariot is," my master said;
  "His head within, his feet convulsed without.
"The other two with their heads downward stretched,
  "One Brutus is who from the black jaw hangs; 65
  "See how he writhes, and yet no word he speaks;
"And Cassius he who seems so strong of limb.
  "But the night waxes upward; now is time
  "That we depart; all to be seen is seen."
As was his pleasure, I entwined his neck, 70
  While he of time and place quick note observ'd,
  And when the wings were open'd full and large,

Made fast his hold upon the hairy ribs.
  Then tuft by tuft downwards he felt his way
  'Twixt the thick hair and the hard frozen crust. 75
When we had reached the part where rolls the thigh
  Into the substance of the swelling haunch,
  My guide with much distress and earnest toil
Revers'd his head to where his feet had been,
  And seized the hair like to a man who climbs, 80
  So that methought we turned again to hell.
" Hold firm! for by no other stair than this,"
  My master said, panting like weary man,
  " Can we depart from this great place of woe."
Then by a rocky outlet forth he passed, 85
  And made me seat myself upon the ledge,
  He nearing me, but with a cautious tread.
Mine eye I lifted up and thought to find,
  As I had left him, Lucifer unchanged;
  And, lo! I saw him with his feet reversed. 90
And if I then was wearied and perplexed,
  Let the dull herd be judge, who do not see
  What was the point which I had newly passed.
" Arise!" my master said, " up to thy feet;
  " The way is long, and evil is the road, 95
  " Now midway climbs the sun his matin course."
It was no lofty palace's saloon
  Where we now were, but nature's dungeon cave,
  Where the soil baleful was, and the light scant.

" Before I stir myself from this abyss, 100
" Master," I said, when upright I had risen,
" Something explain that I no longer err.
" Where be the ice? and why is this one fixed
" Reversed thus? and how, in hours so few
" From eve to morn hath the sun run his course?" 105
And then he said—" Thyself thou thinkest still
" On th' other side the centre, where I grasped
" The hair of the world-piercing worm malign,
" On that side thou, so long as I went down;
" When I had turned, then thou hadst passed the point 110
" Whither from ev'ry part all weights do tend,
" Now thou art come the hemisphere beneath,
" Opposed to that coped by the great dry land,
" And under whose meridian height He died,
" The Man, in birth and life, who knew no sin 115
" Thy feet are planted on the smaller sphere,
" Which forms on th' other side Giudecca's bound
" Here it is morning when 'tis ev'ning there;
" And he whose shaggy hide our ladder made,
" As he has ever been, still fixed remains. 120
" Upon this part cast out from heav'n he fell;
" And then the land, which ev'rywhere had spread,
" For fear of him the ocean made her veil,
" And reached our hemisphere; and it may be,
" Fleeing from him, this empty space was left 125
" By that which yonder shows and upwards swells.'

There is beneath a place so far remote
  From Beelzebub as the great tomb extends,
  Which, not by sight, but by the sound is known
Of a small rivulet which here descends
  Through a rock's cleft, which it had worn away,
  Where winds its current down the gentle slope.
My chief and I, following this hidden path,
  Set forth on our return to the bright world,
  Having no thought nor care for any rest,
Upwards we clomb, he first and second I,
  Till I at length through a round opening saw
  Those beauteous things which with the heavens revolve;
Thence we went forth once more to see the stars.

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